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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SUCCESSFUL CURRICULUM CHANGE

BY

NEIL ERNEST INGRAM

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
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N. Ingram

(Student's Signature)

Box A2409
Lacombe, Alberta
TOC 1SO

Date: Sept 14, 1993

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Teachers' Perceptions of Successful Curriculum Change" submitted by NEIL ERNEST INGRAM in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION.

R. G. McIntosh

Dr. R.G. McIntosh (supervisor)

W. G. Maynes

Dr. W. Maynes

L. [illegible]

Dr. L. Beauchamp

Date: Sept. 14, 1993

THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER WHO MODELLED RESPECT FOR BOTH PEOPLE AND EDUCATION, AND WHO PROVIDED ME WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT TO BECOME THE BEST THAT I COULD BE.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perspectives on successful curriculum change. Alberta's Elementary Language Arts curriculum as well as the Program Continuity policy have both indicated philosophical shifts in approaches to teaching and student learning. The shift is towards a more child-centered approach and in many ways parallels the Whole Language philosophy. Program Continuity was to be implemented in Alberta schools by September, 1993; however, because a new Minister of Education was appointed in the spring of 1993, this has been delayed by one year. By exploring the experiences of teachers who have successfully shifted their teaching practices and beliefs from the more traditional, "basal" reader approach to the child-centered Whole Language approach, a deeper understanding of the change process may result.

Two questions guided the research: (1) What factors influenced teachers to make changes in curriculum methodologies and philosophies with respect to language arts? and (2) What was influential in making the implementation successful at the (a) personal level, (b) local level, (c) district level, and (d) government level? Fullan's (1982,1991) model of factors and characteristics affecting educational change was used to guide the investigation of these questions. Three school sites and seven teachers were chosen as the participants in the study. Because of the nature of the study, a qualitative, inductive methodology was used A semi-structured interview was utilized as the vehicle for data collection. Interpretivist analysis was used allowing categories and themes to emerge from the data.

The findings of the study support many of Fullan's contentions, and reveal other pertinent insights into the change process. It was established through an analysis of the data that two factors guided the teachers' initiation and implementation process: (1) that the process of change evolves, and (2) that the meaning of change evolves. Many influential factors combine and interact in powerful ways to influence both the process and meaning of change. Two crucial stages of the change process were described--initiation and implementation. The meaning of change evolved through complex interactions involving the "fit" of the innovation, the 3R's of initiation, significant role players, professional development activities and restructuring.

The findings of this study led to the identification of several implications for administrators and other change facilitators. When contemplating an innovation at the local school level, teachers' subjective meanings of change cannot always be planned for, and therefore must be accommodated in many ways so as to improve the success rate of innovation attempts. To better accomplish this may require the application of eight general principles: (1) awareness of the nature of the change, (2) understanding the process of initiation, (3) connecting combinations of factors, (3) inclusion of major role players, (4) focus on deep meaning change, (5) development of a school "change" culture, (6) evolutionary planning and vision building, (7) influence of simultaneous, compatible innovations, and (8) time and professional development for change. These also establish direction for further research and study.

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CHAPTER 1
Introducing the Study

Background

The Early Childhood Services (ECS) and Elementary Education branches of Alberta Education were merged in the spring of 1987. This decision suggested that a more rational approach towards implementation of a student-centred learning philosophy for kindergarten through grade six children was being undertaken. A critical outcome of this merger was the formulation of the Education Program Continuity policy in 1988. Underlying this policy was a commitment on the part of Alberta Education to "the importance of providing children with continuity in learning experiences" (Alberta Education, 1988, p. 7), and therefore, to "ensure continuity in children's ECS through grade six learning experiences which are consistent with principles of child development" (1988, p. 9). The implementation of this policy was to take place in elementary classrooms by August 31, 1993. However, in the interim a new minister of education was appointed and the implementation has been put on hold for a year to further assess the policy.

Alberta Education's Elementary School Handbook (1990) supports the policies of Education Program Continuity quite clearly by encouraging (a) the development of children as "whole human beings" (p. 12), (b) the belief that the learning environment would provide experiences influenced by what the children bring to the school and what children already know, and (c) the continuing input from education at home. Further, integrated learning strategies are to be found in other Alberta Education documents

such as the Elementary Language Arts Curriculum Guide (Alberta Education, 1982) which supports the philosophy of integrated learning strategies that are compatible with these same principles of child development.

The philosophies and methodologies on learning language stressed by Alberta Education are synonymous with many characteristics of a movement coined "Whole Language." Many of the ideas and beliefs about learning in a child-centred environment are promoted through this approach to teaching language arts to elementary students.

Many teachers and other stakeholders in education have adopted the philosophy of Whole Language in their work. Others are being pressured to move in this direction to accommodate the implementation of Program Continuity. It is these processes of initiation and implementation which were the crux of this study. More specifically, the focus was on teachers who had experienced effective change processes in their language arts programs through shifts in their beliefs and practices.

An exploration of the teachers' change processes will provide insights into successful curriculum change at the school level. It is within this context that most deep, meaningful change occurs (Fullan, 1991). Teachers are the actual change facilitators and if they do not internalize the innovations, they will stand little chance of being implemented. The descriptions of the teachers' change processes will add to the understanding of influences affecting change at the local level.

Purpose of the Study

Change is a reality that all institutions and their members must face. Whether it is perceived as positive and progressive or antagonistic and bothersome is largely a result of local conditions and influences. Within the local school context, principals, parents, teachers and students are challenged by the same forces. How they receive, plan and act on these challenges will determine their effectiveness in facilitating the growth of confident, contributing, and functional citizens.

The practices that have been used in schools for years are being challenged and scrutinized more than ever before as new demands and dimensions are added to the education mandate. The beliefs and conceptions put forward in documents like "Program Continuity" suggest that we need to change many of our conceptions about how children learn, and how we can best facilitate that learning. Teachers are now being asked to begin the change process towards more effective strategies for students of the '90's. Many teachers feel threatened, fearful, confused and isolated by the pressures to change. Others, however, have made the journey and have done so quite successfully. To explore their experiences and processes will provide us with a better understanding of how to assist others who have not yet made the journey.

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of successful curriculum innovation. The innovation that was the focus of this study was Whole Language instruction within the context of elementary schools. The teachers who participated have made the transition from the

traditional, basal reader approach to the more child-centered Whole Language approach.

What is "Whole Language?" This question has been actively and hotly debated in the literature for the last number of years. As Zola (1989, p. 9) asserts, it is "a stubbornly indefinable concept." The meanings are wide and varied as Zola points out with a quote from Gunderson (p. 9): "There are as many manifestations of whole language instruction as there are whole language teachers." Further, Zola proceeds to compare Whole Language with Taoism because both are often undefinable and emerge with a wide range of renderings. It is not within the parameters of this study to attempt to determine the "truth" about what Whole Language is and is not. Instead, the term is described as it was interpreted and applied to this study's purpose.

Monson and Pahl (1991) successfully and succinctly analyzed the basic tenets of the Whole Language philosophy by comparing it to the more traditional approaches. Focusing in on the classroom teacher's role, they note:

> Whole language involves a fundamental change in a teacher's belief system about the culture of the classroom. . . . It requires a complex shift in emphasis from the historical model of teaching, in which teachers dispense knowledge to students, to an approach through which students actively construct meaning. (p. 51)

The teacher must shift in paradigms from the traditional role characterized by "transmission" to the role characterized by "transaction." Students no longer are treated as the typical "blank-slates" with teachers transmitting a body of content, but are actively engaged in a process

bridging the known with the unknown. The transmission paradigm is rooted in the industrial models where students are products on an assembly line, and teachers the workers forced to fill quotas in the most cost-effective manner. Translated to the classroom, the skills of arithmetic, reading and writing were taught through "drill and practice" exercises providing all children with the same basic skills. Monson and Pahl (1991) assert that to move away from this perspective forces the teacher to take a completely new direction with a new emphasis.

Proponents of Whole Language (Altwerger, Edelsky, & Flores, 1987; Newman & Church, 1990; Zola, 1989; Monson & Pahl, 1991; Goodman, 1986) are adamant that the Whole Language emphasis is not a practice, a set of strategies, a set of instructional materials, or a prescribed program. It is often described as a set of beliefs and a philosophical perspective about learning (Newman & Church, 1990). Mickelson (1986, p. 1) believes that Whole Language is "a concept--an idea about how human beings become literate. It involves real people using language in personal and meaningful ways." Monson and Pahl (1991, p. 52) claim that this requires the following:

> . . . a new set of assumptions about learning. . . . the teacher designs learning experiences that foster active engagement with the known for the purposes of understanding the unknown. . . . Learning is a process of meaning making and problem-solving; the acquisition of specific facts and skills are peripheral to this central process.

Mickelson (1986, p. 3) interprets the Whole Language philosophy by describing its five fundamental characteristics;

1. The program is child centred;
2. Language is owned by the children;

3. Language in the classroom is meaningful and purposeful;
4. Language is social; and
5. The teacher is a participant, observer and a learner too.

As well, Mickelson acknowledged four basic principles of Whole Language:

> 1. The language arts . . . are interrelated. They are holistic in the sense that if they are broken down into bits and pieces, they no longer constitute whole language. . .
> 2. Literacy emerges. Competence develops as an ongoing refinement process while the children actively engage in language activities and interact with those around them in their attempts to understand their world. . .
> 3. Learning is a constructive process. . . . All learning is generative, or constructive, in nature.
> 4. Individual differences exist. Emergent language and responses to literature are not standard--they are based largely on personal experience. . .

These assumptions and premises of Whole Language were used in identifying the context for this study. The paradigm shift of teachers moving from the transmissional approach to the transactional approach was its focus. As Monson and Pahl (1991, p. 53) believed, "a paradigm shift of this magnitude is no easy feat, particularly if one has experienced success with the transmission belief system and practices."

This paradigm shift from the transmissional to transactional teacher, was the crux of this change study. The following research questions provided the parameters and guidelines of the inquiry:

1. What influenced teachers to make a change in curriculum methodologies and philosophies with respect to language arts?

2. What circumstances or factors were influential in making the implementation successful at the (a) personal level, (b) local level, (c) district level, and (d) government level?

Significance of the Study

As schools attempt to accommodate the needs of their clientele, governments, district offices, consultants, publishers and educational innovators are increasingly creating innovations for the classroom. Teachers and administrators are being flooded with changing curriculum, practices and belief systems. Increasing technology is only accelerating this process and illuminating the weaknesses of traditional teaching practices. What was effective thirty years ago cannot be assumed to meet the challenges today. To manage and plan for these and other changes, there will need to be a better understanding of several influences including stakeholders in education, resources, funding, time, professional development and the like, in the hopes of increasing the success of implementation.

As educational change becomes more of a reality in the classroom, teachers and principals will need the tools to effectively select and implement innovations. The wave of the future may well be the ability to take these innovations that are meaningful and good and successfully internalize them. Whether change is "top-down" or "bottom-up," any change "happening" with respect to curriculum and instruction will succeed or fail at the classroom, grass-roots level. Change will need to be both "planned" and "natural." Teachers will have to be "forward-thinking," and

must constantly analyze and judge the applicability and usefulness of the innovations being considered.

Towards this end, this study served to unearth deep and subjective meanings of the change process. To nurture innovation at the teacher level, teachers' contexts must be better understood. The findings from this study may assist those in change facilitation positions at many levels, but especially those of local school administration and teachers. To have perspectives on where teachers are, what drives their motivations for change, and how the implementation can best be accommodated are all practical benefits of such a study.

At a more specific level, teachers and administrators may gain insights into the change process being encouraged through new policies such as Program Continuity. Expectations and process planning may take on more meaningful dimensions that would facilitate more effective implementation. Government and curriculum planners may also find the findings useful for both initiation and implementation strategies.

Finally, at the theoretical level, there may be concepts with respect to the change process supported by the findings of this study that would merit further research. As well, the findings may support and corroborate research findings from other studies, thus strengthening the theoretical foundations of the change process as perceived from the local level.

Assumptions

There were three underlying assumptions governing the conduct of this study:

1. The participants were honest and free of inhibitions within the interview framework.

2. The participants were teachers who had shifted from traditional, stratified and segmented teaching of language arts to the integrated, child-centred approach as outlined in such documents as the Education Program Continuity Policy of Alberta Education.

3. The participants could accurately recall the process of change that they went through in their shift to Whole Language.

Delimitations

There were four identifiable delimitations built into this study:

1. There were only seven elementary teacher participants involved in the study.

2. There were only three schools involved in the study.

3. The semi-structured interview process and log book were the only sources of data collection.

4. The study was delimited by a single curriculum area, i.e. successful implementation of Whole Language.

Limitations

There were two definite limitations to the study:

1. The abilities of the participants to accurately recall the significant experiences that prompted and created change.

2. The study's findings may not be transferable to the change process of other teachers involved with Education Program Continuity, other curriculum subjects, or sites.

Definition of Terms

Education Program Continuity: Alberta Education's official policy statement on the articulation of children's learning experiences from kindergarten to grade six.

Innovation/Change: An intended alteration to existing policy or practice (Duquette, 1990).

Whole Language: An attitude to teaching language arts which simultaneously integrates reading, writing, speaking, and listening within a child-centred context (MacDonald, 1987).

Organization of the Study

This document is organized into six chapters. In chapter one, the background of the study is described, as well as the problem, its significance and study parameters. The second chapter is devoted to a review of the literature--focusing on the process and meaning of change. Chapter three outlines the interpretivist research methodology used in this study. Chapter four presents the findings emerging from the data. Analysis of the findings is presented in chapter five. Finally, in chapter six, conclusions and implications of the findings are summarized.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Related Literature

Introduction

The broad area of "change," especially as it relates to education, has been researched extensively. To attempt to review all aspects of the "change" literature would be a study in its own right and much of it would, in any case, be beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, the focus of this review will be on change as it relates to the local context--the school. To further develop the context and direction of this study, five general topics are reviewed and discussed: the nature of change, change orientations, the process of change, change strategies and theories, and staff development as it relates to school culture.

Nature of Change

> *The crux of change is how individuals come to grips with reality.* (Fullan, 1991)

To many, if not most, planners and curriculum developers of the 1960's and early 1970's the meaning of change was not a primary concern. It wasn't until the mid 1970's that the repeated failure of reforms in schools and school districts inspired further studies into the complexities of the change process (Firestone & Corbett, 1988). Fullan (1991) suggested that in the 60's most innovations and "change" research in education were concerned only with adoption. A primary occurrence during the 70's was with the "non-implementation" of a very large portion of the innovations introduced in the '60's. Implementation attempts during the '60's seemed

to operate with the same mind-set of an old western movie "Shoot first and ask questions later." Innovations were being "adopted" and haphazardly implemented before the important question "why?" was asked. By pumping out innovation after innovation, well intended planners lost sight of the reasons behind them, the direction that was needed and the people who had to implement them. The impacts of change on the very people who had to come to grips with it had been neglected. Lieberman (1982) maintained that much of the planning that filters down comes "with the myth that paper statements, broad goals, and money can radically alter the way schools work" (p. 249). Fullan (1982) added that "We vastly underestimate both what change is . . . and the factors and processes which account for it" (p. 24), and that it is necessary to be aware of the personal or collective anxieties and uncertainties that pervade change. Innovations may be viewed as challenges to established practices, values and beliefs, and to understand the meaning of change one must know to what extent it is valued by the people affected, and to what degree it is implemented. The meaning change has for educational stakeholders depends upon the interplay of variables at work when an innovation is introduced.

Meaning must be found if change attempts are to have any success. Huberman (1973) claimed that both individual and institutional factors must be accounted for in the planning of change. Two decades later Sergiovanni (1991, p. 269) emphasized the same claim--that "what counts in the end is bringing together the ideas and commitments of a variety of people who have a stake in the success of the school." The last two decades have seen many change attempts and most experts agree that no one factor

alone can bring meaning to the change process. Fullan (1991) suggested there are two general realities that must be accommodated: the subjective and objective.

Subjective versus objective realities. In educational change the subjective reality deals largely with the key implementors--teachers. To understand change in schools, one must first understand teachers and where they are at. The "dailiness" of teachers, no matter how illogical, inappropriate, or meaningless to outsiders, is a primary factor in the success of any innovation. Lieberman (1982) noted that "those outside the classroom assume that if one can describe a practice, that practice can be employed by the teacher." She further described the teacher as isolated, practical and satisfied largely by student outcomes. Their world is schizophrenic because they are trying to better themselves through self-improvement, but at the same time are closed to new ideas because of the often harsh reality of the classroom where mandates and public policy are "light years" away from the students in the school. Outsiders assume that teaching is fairly certain and prescribed on a daily basis, when in fact it is anything but. Problems occur when innovators take an over-simplified view of the teacher's reality. Lieberman (1982, p. 260) asked, "Could it be that the farther away one gets from the classroom, the more impatient one gets about other people changing their behavior and the more unrealistic one becomes about what is possible in practice?" Further, after studying the local school context for a year, she outlined eight realities of the teacher (p. 262):

1. Children come everyday.

2. Somehow the curriculum needs to be organized.
3. Teachers need to have a repertoire of knowledge, skills, and abilities to handle different modes of organizing.
4. Groups of children must be handled and managed somehow.
5. The more teachers are involved with each other, the more time, energy, and skills are needed.
6. We all live with the myth of unlimited resources. There is never enough.
7. The human organization of schools is complicated by many conflicting values held about schooling as well as differences in personalities.
8. The descriptions of technology as it relates to teaching and learning probably far surpass what human beings can actually perform.

Fullan (1991) cited Huberman's research which described the teachers' daily life as a "classroom press." Four influences were identified: (a) immediacy and concreteness including 200,000 interchanges a year, (b) multidimensionality and simultaneity where several operations are carried on at the same time, (c) adapting to ever-changing conditions meaning unpredictability where anything can happen, and (d) personal involvement with students where meaningful interaction with students is often necessary before academic learning occurs (p. 33). According to Huberman and Crandall, cited in Fullan, this "classroom press" has the effect of isolating teachers, exhausting their energy and limiting their opportunities for sustained reflection (1991, p. 33). Lortie's (1975) Five Town study supported her rather disquieting picture of teachers as being isolated, unequipped for the classroom, uncertain about their practices, and starved for rewards. Goodlad (1984) painted a similar portrait of teachers as very autonomous within their own classes with students that are borderline successful swimming in a sea of passive learning. Clearly the teacher's

dailiness is characterized rather negatively in the literature. The message would seem to be that teaching is full of insecurity, is very complex, and characterized by organized confusion. So what happens when change comes knocking on the door?

Fullan (1991) identified two negative outcomes of implementation within such contexts--false clarity and painful unclarity. The former indicates that teachers believe they have implemented an innovation when they really have only internalized its "superficial trappings." The second is worse for unclear implementation has been tried, and has failed because of lack of support and improper conditions for change. Fullan described three themes that then become part of the teacher's situation. First, there is a state of fixidity where attitudes become quiet conservative and the status quo is maintained. Second, the day is so filled with activity and demand that there is little room for change; indeed, it is "bitterly resented." Third, when change does inevitably come teachers change as little as possible, but just enough to relieve innovation pressures. According to the literature, teachers do not live in vibrant and successful environments that are brimming over with confidence and vitality. Rather, the teacher's environment is in a state of ambiguity and discomfort. The bottom line, however, is all too clear, and Fullan (1991, p. 117) said it best: "Educational change depends on what teachers do and think--it's as simple and complex as that." Tuning into the many subjective realities of change participants (or recipients) becomes the essence of change.

Objective realities are discovered on the other side of the coin. There, Fullan (1991) claimed, one can see the multidimensionality of

change and understand it as its planners intended. One can better understand these by recognizing three requisites before assuming a change has been implemented and is being practiced. There are usually new materials being used, new practices being followed and new belief systems being adhered to. These dimensions of change are interacting in complex ways, but to succeed in implementation there needs to be a degree of meaning attached to each of these. Thus the objective reality of an innovation requires monitoring and assessing as it interacts with the subjective realities of its implementors.

The delicate and often volatile interaction between subjective realities and objective realities give rise to meaningful change. It has been noted by researchers (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976; McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978; Fullan, 1991; Sarason, 1971; Hall & Hord, 1987; Goodlad, 1975) that meaningful change takes place at the local level or individual level. This is where objective realities meet the subjective and where innovations fail or succeed. The meaning of change is only as good as the individual people make it, and therefore, an innovation attempt is only as good as the respect it shows for the people in the process, and their perspectives as they look outwards at the change. How change is approached can often influence teachers' tactics and strategies--change orientations may help or hinder these.

Change Orientations

Meanings of change can be developed through various change frameworks, conceptions and orientations. How change is viewed and how it is understood often leads the process in different directions with different

results. Change has itself been typified in several, often times conflicting, categorizations. A review of the literature leaves one bewildered at the overwhelming number of conceptualizations attempting to bring meaning to change. A sample of the typologies will be presented.

Kozma (1985) identified four frameworks: (a) Confrontational processes between individuals or groups have contrary or opposing beliefs. The impetus for change arises from pressure--pressure creates conflict, which in some way produces change; (b) Diffusion of change assumes that the innovation is a "given" and that its very introduction to a system produces change through a "spreading-out" process. The degree to which this occurs depends upon the characteristics of the adopters and of the innovation; (c) Planned change occurs from innovations that are often brought in because of internal self-actualization needs. This is facilitated by shared decision making, trust, communication and often change agents; (d) Finally, the complex organizational framework views innovation as an act of groups or individuals in positions of authority in response to some kind of pressures outside the system. Characteristics of the implementation include formalizations and centrality. Kozma noted that each method has its strengths, but each fails in some way. His research led him to support a "grounded theory" focusing on social processes in which evolution of the change process is key to success. The process is a personal one that sees past experiences interacting with and evolving into newer innovations. Collaborative efforts are viewed as more effective than individual ones, and the local site is paramount to developing and implementing the innovation.

Another classification of change typologies similar to those outlined by Kozma was presented by Warren Bennis (1976). Three types of change orientations are described: planned change, coercion, and interactive change. Like Kozma's description of "planned change", Bennis believed that in such a context all those involved have equal power and function in prescribed fashions. The procedures for implementing change are well laid out and there is little deviation from the "plan." "Coercion" is synonymous with Kozma's confrontational typology where one group determines the goals for another and the power is unequal. One group is in control and maintains the power. The third type is "interaction change" which involves collaboration and mutual goal setting. Power is shared, but there is little direction or deliberateness in their efforts.

Perhaps another change orientation that is related to interaction change is natural change. This is characterized by little goal setting or prescribed action plans. Change occurs in reactive measures as unanticipated stimuli from the environment applies some type of pressure (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1993).

Huberman (1973) took a more simplistic view of types of changes in his identification of three basic types: hardware, software and interpersonal relations. Hardware includes any additions to school equipment like computers, playgrounds and the like. Software innovations relate to the content and range of the curriculum. Interpersonal relations involve changes in the roles and relationships between the various role players within the school. Huberman went on to state that these are not as straightforward as they may seem in that they all usually involve people

and relationships--it is human quality that is the "product" of the system in the end.

A more established and much more in-depth theory of change, including change typologies, originated from Robert Chin (1976). He outlined in great detail three types of strategies which actually may be interpreted as orientations towards change: empirical-rational, normative-reeducative, and power strategies. The first, empirical-rational, assumes that men and woman are rational people and can see real needs towards the pursuit of which they apply desirable and effective innovations. These are adopted by the system because they can be rationally and intelligently justified. Second, the normative-reeducative proponents view people's actions according to socio-cultural norms. Their values and beliefs guide their actions, and commitment to change only occurs when these are modified along with needed changes in knowledge and skills. Power strategies, the third type, are based on an unequal power distribution between stakeholders. Usually legitimate, authoritarian power creates the policy and the procedures for change. Again, this would be parallel to approaches described by Bennis and Kozma. "Coercion" is perhaps a more telling term in the domain of educational change since there is currently little outright, heavy-handed, power driven change. However, systems of money or material rewards can "coerce" others into new innovations (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993).

Other change typologies exist in orientations that stress interactions between people and levels. Berman (1976) identified perhaps one of the more publicized and popular descriptions of such an orientation in his

work with the RAND corporation. He found through their research on change that three processes of implementation could be found. Again, these processes can be interpreted as orientations since he differentiated between implementation and implementation strategies. The first is by far the most "success" oriented type of implementation called "mutual adaptation." This occurs when an innovation site adapts the change to fit its purposes. The project is implemented, but only after being modified by its users. The second is termed "cooptation" where participants appear to adapt the project to accommodate existing routines with no actual change taking place. Third, "non-implementation" occurs when there is no adaptation by either the project or the participants because of indifference or implementation problems. Largely the only successes that Berman found were in local contexts where local interests modified projects to create meaning and usefulness for them. Materials, processes and practices were adapted to fit the day-to-day reality of the teachers.

Taking their direction from the RAND studies as well, McLaughlin and Marsh (1978) described four general planning strategies found in change agent projects. The first was "top-down" where central office staff create and direct the innovation. Second, and just the opposite was found in "grass-roots" innovation where teachers and local schools controlled the change with little involvement from central office. Third, "no planning" existed where a change was externally introduced with no involvement from the district itself. Finally, "collaborative planning" which equally involved planning by both teachers and district office. As with Berman's "mutual adaptation," this last type was perceived as being a much more

effective strategy. Top down methods were often well intended, but could not muster up enough teacher commitment. Grass-roots changes were slightly more effective, but usually did not fair well in the long run because of lack of district support. Only collaborative planning managed to create the support and encouragement from both central office and local school sites. The originators of the ideas did not have as great an impact as did the planning strategy in which all were involved.

Roitman and Mayer (1982), utilizing the work of Fullan and Pomfret (1977), summarized much of the RAND theory above by suggesting that there are two camps of change researchers--"pro-fidelity" and "pro-adaptation." Pro-fidelity supporters argued that innovations have components that are well planned and well defined and that to adapt or modify them in any way would only result in the negative consequences of "dilution." This would weaken and lower the outcome standards of the innovation. The pro-adaptation camp, as described by Roitman and Mayer (1982), were in agreement with Berman, MacLaughlin and Marsh. They argued that "differing organizational contexts and practitioner needs demand on-site modification, virtually without exception" (p. 3). If users can adapt programs to local needs, then the adoption will have long lasting effects.

The findings and interpretations of the RAND studies have come under fire from some critics who claimed that the project outcomes they researched were biased. Roitman and Mayer (1982) contended that there was an obvious absence of project measurement methodologies to test fidelity. The measure of their outcome was "the extent to which projects

met their own goals, different as they might be for each project (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, Vo. VII, p. 50)" as cited in Roitman and Mayer (1982). This inclination or interpretation served to better reflect adaptation and minimize fidelity. In 1980 Berman responded with a significant change in his assertions on change. He proposed a theory known as the "normative-contingency" model. This model has as its basic tenet that various situations with different innovations will require strategies specific to that localized context. Further, where one finds conditions that are fairly structured, high fidelity approaches may work best while low structure systems are inclined to be more adaptive in nature.

Berman, as cited in Roitman and Mayer (1982), outlined five situational parameters to assist in designing an implementation strategy: (1) scope of change--is it incremental or major? (2) What is the certainty of technology or theory? (3) What amount of conflict is there over policy goals and means? (4) Is the structure of the institutional setting rigid or loosely coupled? (5) What is the nature of the environment's stability? Although Berman attempted to narrow the gap between the two opposing camps, Roitman and Mayer (1982) concluded that it has done little to persuade either side and the debate continues. However, in their own research, they found that programs that were "(1) . . . operationalized in relatively unambiguous, complete, and concrete terms can be implemented with acceptable fidelity at adopting sites; and (2) Explicitly operationalized programs will be effective at adopting sites if they are implemented with reasonable fidelity" (p. 15). This would contrast with most of the

literature supporting adaptation and "re-invention" with low-fidelity outcomes.

Finally, one last orientation toward change is developed by Cuban (1988). His typology distinguished two types of change--first order and second order. First order changes are "intentional efforts to enhance existing arrangements while correcting deficiencies in policies and practices" (p. 93). According to Fullan's (1991) interpretation, they are made to make things more efficient and effective, but tend not to influence the organizational features of a system. Tams (1991) notes that these changes can be found in the three types of categories described by Huberman earlier (1973): hardware, software, and interpersonal relations. Second order changes, however, "seek to alter the fundamental ways in which organizations are put together, including new goals, structures, and roles" (Fullan, 1991, p. 29). It would seem that many of the innovations of the past three decades have been largely first order and that the challenge of the 90's will be to address the more emerging, salient second order changes.

Investigations into the orientations to change are ongoing, but most conventional thought today seems to support the importance of local characteristics and on-site adaptation. Berman's "macro and micro" implementation, Miles "innovative versus familiar," Hall and Hord's (1987) "Concerns Based Approach," and authors such as Goodlad (1975) who claim that the school site is the place to start reform for success, all propose the importance of situational characteristics within each and every individual site. In addition, change does not have to be treated as an

externally driven innovation. Change can be identified, described, analyzed and developed progressively through strategies such as the normative-reeducative orientations (Chin & Benne, 1976) which looks at the people within an organization as collaborative problem solvers. Owens (1987) suggested that such organizations exhibit varying degrees of "organizational health" (p. 218). This can be interpreted as a system that has the capability of reacting to its environment and consistently adapting to it over time. Supporters of this set of strategies, according to Owens (1987), would deny that innovations can be effectively imposed on schools, but that schools must have an internal capacity for continuous problem solving. This approach would view change from quite a different perspective than one which suggests that schools deal primarily with externally promoted innovations.

The meaning of change continues to be the focus of investigation during the 90's--a period within which people are "innovation wary," where funding and resources are not nearly as plentiful as they were in the 70's and 80's, and where second order changes are viewed as the path to reform. Orientations towards change now seem to be leaning toward pro-adaptation strategies for the simple reason that the subjective realities of schools are so overwhelming and complex, and perhaps because consultants, change agents and the like are not as plentiful as they once were. Instead, school administration and staff are now becoming their own initiators and implementors. This is not to suggest that high-fidelity innovation is unattainable, but only that its methods would seem to be more limited when it comes to clarifying and satisfying the quest for the meaning

of change. Much of the meaning has been discovered, however, in the ever-expanding role of the process itself.

The Process of Change

The second focus of the change literature is on the all-important, if not elusive, "change process." The lack of such a focus was clearly evident in the 60's and early 70's as the process of change was interpreted as the invention of an innovation and the drop off at the school's door where it would magically, so it was thought, be institutionalized through some form of osmosis. The astonishing degree of "non-implementation" which occurred during this period eventually led to theories that better explained the process of change. According to the literature (Fullan, 1991; Hall & Hord, 1987; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993; Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Rozenblum & Louis, 1981; Gray, 1984; and Kozma, 1985), the days are gone when change was viewed as an "event" rather than a "process." Gray (1984) contrasted the two views, emphasizing that the process of change is critical in the life cycle of a new program (p. 3):

> Viewing implementation as an event leads users to spend time and money on research, development, or purchase of new programs, but nothing on implementation. It leads evaluators to attempt summative evaluations of programs which are in the midst of the radical change entailed by implementation. In contrast, viewing implementation as a process leads to a consideration of the changes required in both the organization. . . and individuals. . . when a new program is adopted.

Hall and Hord (1987) agreed. They discovered that summative evaluations after the first year of an "implemented" program led to premature labels of "success" or "failure," and that the planners would then march on to their next "fix." However, most investigators of change now

perceive the process as a given, and that there are phases and steps which must be used in planning a change.

Berman and McLaughlin (1976) spoke consistently about the various processes involved in change. The evidence compiled over the last ten to fifteen years seems to be quite conclusive that change is viewed not as an event, but as a process. Change has to be perceived this way because this process inevitably leads an innovation through multiple interactions between the demands of the change and the subjective needs of the participants. Multiple realities are experienced by the various individuals involved in the change process as innovations pass through the various stages of their life cycle.

Fullan (1991) suggested that most researchers agree there are three basic phases to planned change: initiation, implementation, and continuation (p. 47). Rosenblum and Louis (1981) cited five variations of processes developed and utilized by planners of organizational change. Some models of the change process involved five stages and some only two, but they all accommodated the significant aspects of the change process: some type of pre-implementation awareness building and commitment to the innovation, implementation phases where steps are taken to make the change, and post implementation commitment where the innovation is continually used. The key concept here was not what numbers or names one gave to the phases, but that they could not be viewed as being segmented and occurring in linear fashion. Interaction occurs not only between the phases of the process, but also between different innovations that may be occurring at the same time. Kozma's study (1985) supported

this assertion by confirming the great difficulty of trying to differentiate between one phase and another. Fullan (1991) related the context of the 90's to the entanglement of multiple innovations. The results and outcomes of such a process cannot be easily discerned, but must be recognized in the final analysis. Below, each phase is described briefly keeping in mind the concept of phase interaction.

Initiation. Fullan (1991) suggested that initiation or adoption occurs when a decision has been made to accept an innovation. It is important to note that from an organizational perspective, externally developed programs could be said to be adopted when in fact the individuals within that organization have not accepted the change. Berman and McLaughlin (1976) observed four factors that influenced participants' decisions to proceed with an innovation: (a) if there was evidence of a good quality idea, (b) if there was government funding to assist in the change, (c) if it met with local needs, and (d) if there were incentives for the people responsible for the change. Fullan (1991) supported all four of these factors and added to them further influences: (a) access to innovations, (b) advocacy from central office staff, (c) teacher advocacy, (d) existence and quality of the idea, (e) external change agents, (e) community pressure, support or apathy, (f) new policy/funds, and (g) problem solving vs. bureaucratic orientations. Fullan contended that the decisions made throughout an innovation process created a continuing cycle of adoption and implementation. One feeds off of the other in dynamic ways, creating a "looping" effect. Further, the order of the influences are not important, but what is is the powerful combinations that can result

from two or three factors impacting decisions to adopt a change.

Huberman and Miles (1984, p. 57) agreed noting in their review of twelve cases that motives were often varied and multiple. The surprising finding in their research was that the prime motivator was "administrative pressure varying from strong encouragement to raw power." Adopting an innovation to solve a local problem was not a "salient" feature. Other more influential factors included professional growth and the addition of resources and curriculum practices.

Fullan (1991) recognized that being aware of these influences and factors was not as effective as understanding how they work, and knowing what will produce effective motivation and start-ups. His 1991 edition does discuss some insights that expand on his initial discussions. First, changes that have been adopted for "symbolic or opportunistic" motives usually have little in the way of proper support or follow-through and often do not succeed. Second, and somewhat encouraging, is that more initiations are beginning to succeed. Fullan asserted that those that are succeeding seem to be addressing the 3 R's--relevance, readiness, and resources. Huberman and Miles (1984, p. 59) recognized six variables that seemed to capture the interest of the "users:" salient features striking users and administrators, initial sizing up of the innovation, goodness of fit at classroom level, perceived changes anticipated at the classroom level, perceived change anticipated at the organization level, and goodness of organization fit.

Initiation is receiving more attention as the local implementation site has gained more prominence. Clearly there are numerous influences and factors to consider and it would seem logical that the more the better, but

the emphasis should still be on combinations of two or three at a time. Moreover, the process of initiation needs to be perceived as interacting with implementation so that as one improves so does the other. Commitment to adoption does not end at the start of implementation; indeed, it may only be starting.

Implementation. The implementation phase has been well researched in the change literature during the past ten to fifteen years. This perhaps serves as a commentary on the comparative number of recognized external innovations compared to internal or "grounded" innovations. It might be worthwhile to identify more changes developed from within a school or school district and analyze initiation from this viewpoint. However, it is easy to understand the emphasis on this phase of change as Ornstein and Hunkins (1988, p. 223) reminded us ". . . the problem is that implementing a curriculum has not been considered a crucial stage." Rather, much of the research has been directed at the development of curriculum policy. The result of this was, once again, that a majority of these policies did not get implemented as intended. Fullan (1991, p. 67) reminded us that it is during implementation that we must remember that change is "a learning experience for adults involved" as well as for the children, and that for this reason the dynamics of the process must be understood.

Fullan (1991) defined implementation as "the process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities new to the people attempting or expected to change" (p. 65). Fullan and Pomfret (1977) studied fifteen implementation cases and found they could basically be divided into two

camps: twelve used a high fidelity approach and three used a mutual adaptation approach. The former, according to Fullan and Pomfret (1977), refers to "the degree of implementation of an innovation in terms of the extent to which actual use of the innovation corresponds to intended or planned use" (p. 7); and the latter ". . . is directed at analyzing the complexities of the change process vis-a-vis how innovations become developed/changed etc. during the process of implementation" (p. 7). Even with such an imbalanced ratio between the two different processes of implementation studied, they suggested mutual adaptation, as discussed earlier, as their choice for policy reform.

Berman and McLaughlin (1976, p. 349) reasoned that it is the complex organizational structures within an educational setting that are likely responsible for mutating an innovation. It is within these confines that the people doing the implementing must adjust their daily practices to adhere to the innovation, and that the innovation is modified to suit the implementers. The debate over this process as truly being "planned change" (due to the lower degree of fidelity) continues, but this seems to be an effective approach to implementation (Leithwood, 1986; Fullan & Pomfret, 1977). Fullan (1991) claimed, however, that whether an innovation is implemented top-down, bottom-up, mutually adapted or mandated with high fidelity does not matter when it comes to identifying the major influences and factors that affect the process.

Three models identifying process characteristics are presented below. The first, created by Huberman (1973), stressed three major variables with several sub-categories.

A. Inherent or intrinsic variables
1. proven quality of the innovation
2. cost
3. divisibility
4. complexity
5. communicability

B. Situational Variables
6. structure of the instructional system
7. leadership and sponsorship
8. school environment
9. group norms
10. personal characteristics of adopters
11. rewards and punishments

C. Environmental Variables
12. innovation system congruence
13. readiness

Berman and McLaughlin (1976, p. 355) emphasized three major factors that could affect innovations during the implementation stage. Within each of these are sub-categories or variables as outlined below:

A. Project Variables
1. Educational treatment or technology
2. Resource level
3. Scope of proposed change
4. Implementation strategy

B. Institutional Setting
1. Organizational climate and motivations of administration and staff
2. Characteristics of school, district, and principal actors

C. Federal Policies
1. Federal change agent program objectives and management strategies

In recent years, Fullan (1991, p. 68) identified nine factors that he viewed as being influential to implementation success. He stressed once

again that these factors, which are influential to implementation success, should be seen not in isolation, but in dynamic interplay with one another throughout the process of implementation. His framework is outlined below:

A. Characteristics of the Change
1. Need and relevance of the change
2. Clarity
3. Complexity
4. Quality and practicality of program (materials, etc.)

B. Characteristics at the School District Level
5. Central administrative support and involvement
6. Board and community characteristics
7. The principal
8. The teacher

D. Characteristics External to the Local System

9. Government and other agencies

The greater the number of these factors working positively in an implementation the higher the rate of success should be. What Fullan (1991) recognized, based on Louis and Miles' (1990) conceptulizations, is that these do not say enough about the process itself. They serve to identify major influencing factors, but don't say much about how they interact or work with one another. As a response to this Fullan outlined six themes (the first five cited from Louis and Miles) that served to describe the dynamic aspects of the implementation process: (1) vision building, (2) evolutionary planning, (3) initiative taking and empowerment, (4) staff development and resource assistance, (5) monitoring and problem-coping, and (6) restructuring. For successful change to occur, Fullan contended that these all must be present and interacting.

Change planners must realize that they went through a process to invent, plan, and create the innovations, and teachers must do the same. Although the factors and influences described above can go a long way in creating such an environment, they must also be understood. It has been established already that rational, planned change does not work well in many contexts. Questions about how the factors work and interact need to be answered. To do so would allow us to better understand the dynamic process of implementation and in the end assure us of improved continuation.

Continuation. The third stage of change may contribute to the knowledge and assumptions about factors influencing implementation--continuation. This is the phase in which schools can either carry on with their implemented innovation, or discontinue it. Fullan (1991) maintained that the factors that may influence implementation basically affect continuation. If the school districts, school, administrators, teachers or students do not continue to show faith in the innovation, then it may not be incorporated. Berman and McLaughlin (1976) supported this view in their discussion of factors affecting implementation and continuation together. They attribute its success or downfall to project characteristics, institutional setting, and federal policies.

Clearly there are phases in the change process that must be accommodated to improve success with innovation efforts. Initiation is required to start the innovation off with commitment and purpose. Implementation is the process whereby that innovation is brought into use. Continuation is the concluding phase when implementation becomes

internalized or institutionalized within the system or individual, and is no longer thought of as new. The interplay between the factors and themes identified are crucial to establishing the environment for deep meaningful change. Why these combinations are so powerful is not clearly understood, but that multiple motives and influences that strengthen the system would seem to be what change facilitators should aim for. Now, with a deeper understanding of the meaning of change and its process, all that has to be done is to put theory and knowledge together into a strategy.

Change Theories and Models

Perhaps in the area of planned change there have been too many models developed towards the same end--the pursuit of successful implementation. One does not have to search far to find prescriptive models that are created to ease innovations into a system. Most are, of course, influenced by the designer's own biases towards curriculum and change. Whether one believes in fidelity or mutual adaptation, top-down or bottom-up, etc. this belief will affect the nature of the model. For two reasons it is well beyond the scope of this review to describe the many models that exist. First, the models are so numerous that one could write volumes about them. Second, and more important, is this: the nature of the innovation investigated in this study leans toward natural change, and as such, models of planned change may have little to offer. The remainder of this review will, therefore, only deal with those models or theories that are prominent in the literature and that offer insights useful for this study.

Perhaps one of the best known models of change is Lewin's Force Field Analysis. According to Ingram and McIntosh (1976), the base of

Lewin's theory is the belief that all organizations, or groups, are social systems--where all the units, or individuals, are held together by inter-relationships and norms. The social system can be changed by adding or subtracting parts or by making modifications to the nature of the inter-relationships. When an organization is stable it is in a "frozen" state, so to change it there must be an "unfreezing" process initiated through some external source. While in a state of "thaw" the inter-relationships must be modified before it is again "frozen." Lewin believed that to "unfreeze" a certain system it must be manipulated in some way by adding forces, changing the direction of forces, reducing forces, or removing forces. The best ways to induce change are through reducing or removing forces. This lessens the tensions more so than do the other approaches. To determine how to go about making such decisions Lewin believed there were four stages to follow: analyze the present situation, determine what modifications must be made, make the changes, and finally stabilize the situation.

Huberman (1973) discussed three models of planned change--theory-into-practice (or research and development), social interaction, and problem solving. The first model, "theory-into-practice," views the process as a rational process with well laid out sequenced steps. The user is passive and accepting of the decisions made external to the system. The innovation is created out of fact and theory, not out of perceived needs or problems. Its process might include invention, development, production, and dissemination.

Social Interaction models focus on the interactions between people and organizations. Participants are brought through the change process by social communication with colleagues who are using the innovation. This process may include a sequence of stages: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption.

Finally, "problem solving" models are built around the user of the innovation. Needs of users are assessed and innovations are produced to satisfy the needs. Stages might include problem identification, diagnosis, search and retrieval, adaptation, trial, and evaluation. Emphasis is on collaboration with colleagues and usually change agents.

During the 70's there was a lot of attention given to models that saw the change agent as the key to change processes. One of the most influential proponents of such models was Ronald Havelock (1973). He perceived change occurring in two distinct processes--one was from the viewpoint of the participant, and the other from the viewpoint of someone who was trying to change another person. The former process was interpreted as a simple reflex process with three stages: a disturbance, an activity to deal with the disturbance, and effects of activity resulting in satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

The second process, termed "rational problem solving," has six phases: initial disturbance, feeling of need and decision, diagnosis of need as a problem, search for solutions, application of a possible solution to the need, and satisfaction that the problem is solved or dissatisfaction resulting in a repeat of the cycle. Within such a scheme the change agent can act in one of four roles: a catalyst, a solution giver, a process helper or a

resource linker. The innovation then becomes implemented through a six phase model: building a relationship, diagnosing the problem, acquiring relevant resources, choosing the solution, gaining acceptance, and stabilizing the innovation and generating self-renewal. The process is characterized by a problem solving orientation where the "users" needs remain the focus.

Related to the "problem solving" model described by Huberman above, Hall and Hord (1987) developed the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM). The term "change facilitator" was used rather than "change agents," and the needs of the client came first. The major premise of the model is the necessity to understand the needs of the local context, especially the teachers. The principal was viewed as the major change facilitator and as such was responsible for much of the professional staff development. There were seven assumptions to the CBAM model: (1) understanding the point of view of the participants is critical, (2) change is a process, not an event, (3) it is possible to anticipate much that will occur during a change process, (4) innovations come in all sizes and shapes, (5) innovation and implementation are two sides of the change process coin, (6) to change something, someone has to change first, and (7) everyone can be a change facilitator. Three dimensions of the process are key to the CBAM model: stages of concern, levels of use, and innovation configuration. The major impetus behind this model is the commitment to the local context where change facilitators work closely with teachers to address their "emerging and evolving needs."

The last model, or set of models, that will be reviewed have been discussed earlier--"mutual adaptation" and its spin-offs. There's no need to repeat the literature reviewed above, however, it may need to be mentioned again that as both an orientation and a model, local users adapting an innovation to specific needs is popular with many researchers (Berman, 1978; Goodlad, 1975; McLaughlin, 1978; Fullan, 1991). Many of these models are based on the RAND research studies and in the face of the stacks of failed planned change innovations, who's to argue that local adaptation is not the more effective model? Teachers and local school staffs have shown through words, actions and inaction that innovations only succeed if they "buy" into them. Many of the successes would suggest that including teachers in developing both the meaning and the process of change is crucial.

Other models, of course, abound (Organizational Development or OD, Linkage model, R&D models, Overcoming Resistance to Change model, Roger's Adoption model, etc.), and for planned change they can offer insights to understanding the process of change. The literature would suggest that adaption theories are prevalent and that primacy be given to the local school context. Any model that ignores the feeling, ideas and attitudes of the role players at the local level is likely to be short-lived.

Fullan's educational change orientation has been used as the primary model to guide this study. Fullan's work was described earlier under "change orientations" because it was very helpful in discerning roles, interactions, and relationships in change. It was used as the primary model because it dealt with several influences and themes that were crucial to this

study. His themes related to professional development and school culture are dealt with in more depth below.

Staff Development as it Relates to School Culture

The literature on the change process, as reviewed above, leads to the conclusion that the higher the level of interaction and collaboration within a school staff there seems to be in an innovation, the more likely it is to succeed. Fullan (1982) addressed this in one of his concluding dilemmas of educational change: privatism vs. professional development. This may not really be a dilemma if one assumes that teachers need professional development if they are going to grow through progressive changes in their dailiness of teaching (their everyday instructional practices and routines). Several researchers gave priority to this element as a condition for change in the schools (Fullan, 1991; McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978; Lieberman, 1982; Pitner, 1987). McLaughlin and Marsh (1978, p. 69) concluded that during the decade of reform, 1965-1975, a lesson learned was that "even the 'best' educational practice is unlikely to fulfill its promise in the hands of an inadequately trained or unmotivated teacher." The need for high quality, effective professional development is not an issue here. The issue is, how is it to be provided?

When we are studying change and professional development in a school setting, then we are looking at such things as "attitudes, beliefs, and values--in other words, culture" (Owens, 1987, p. 217) to foster needed interaction and fulfillment of needs. Moreover, Deal, as quoted by Firestone and Corbett (1988, p. 335), suggested that to better understand the change process, one should apply the perspectives underlying school

culture because "research on instructionally effective schools suggests that the cultures of those schools do contribute to the quality of learning that takes place there." Firestone and Corbett (1988) went on to suggest that highly achieving schools have not just sets of norms and values, but that they espouse them through both action and use of words (p. 336). Sergiovanni (1991) tapped into the same ideas when he stated that it is key "whether the group identifies with, and is committed to the school and its purposes" (p. 217). As well as school culture advancing development, it can also improve the school climate. Sergiovanni (1991, p. 217) made four generalizations:

> 1. School improvement and enhanced school effectiveness will not likely be accomplished on a sustained basis without the presence of a favorable school climate.
> 2. However, school climates alone cannot bring about school improvement and enhanced school effectiveness.
> 3. Favorable school climates can result in more or less effective schooling depending on the quality of educational leadership. . . to channel climate energy in the right directions.
> 4. Favorable school climates combined with quality educational leadership are essential keys to sustained school improvement and enhanced school effectiveness.

Differentiating between school culture and climate was important to Sergiovanni (1991) as the latter is more concerned with interpersonal attitudes and behaviors of people, the operating style of the school, and the process and style of a school's organization. School culture, however, is more normative in that it is a reflection of shared values and beliefs and commitments of its members. Sergiovanni concluded that the resiliency of the culture is important so that it "bends" with change, but does not "break."

Clearly, the message that is being given is that rather than training teachers through old systems of staff development, the direction to go is to create systems of change within the school that can accommodate and manage change on a continuing basis. Schlechty (1991, p. 96-97) defined the creation of change systems:

> To bring about change in such deeply ingrained structures, leaders must think beyond individual personalities, beyond change agents, and beyond personal actions. Leaders must think of inventing change systems. . . . Without such a system, change will go by fits and starts, and what starts as developmental resources somehow gets turned to supporting the status quo.

Paying heed to a school's culture is not a new concept. Goodlad (1975, p. 171-172) made note of it by cautioning that "the school has a distinctive culture, that this culture is ignored or poorly understood by change agents coming from a different milieu, and that there rarely is a critical mass of responsible persons within this culture seriously engaged in its continuing renewal."

The nourishing and building of a staff culture would appear to be positively related to effective schools. The body of research on this is just beginning to take form. Fullan (1991) noted that effectiveness is positively linked with change and the implementation of change. The values, beliefs, and commitments held by the members of a school can be powerfully steered towards effective innovation practices on a long term basis. Goodlad (1975) again cautioned that even those who would say they treat change as a process do not internalize its deeper meaning--that change is ongoing and so then is the process. To treat one innovation as a process and then start a new process is contradictory to the very premise of change

as a process. By treating it as a one-shot effort, you are really treating it as an event again. A school culture that can develop attitudes that look upon change as a constant and manage it successfully are the schools that have a firm grasp on the future in education.

The consideration of staff development and school cultures are vital to successful change. Although several forms of development can be fostered through numerous activities and strategies (see Pansegrau, 1984), the perspective provided by school culture may be a future-oriented method of analyzing innovation and change so as to develop effective staffs in schools.

Conclusion

Through the review of the literature, I have attempted to identify relevant research on planned change. Five general dimensions were discussed: the nature of change, change orientations, the process of change, change strategies and theories, and staff development as it related to school culture. An understanding of each dimension is vital for change facilitators or leaders in the education system. What may have been the most striking lesson from this review was that innovations and their implementation could not be provided with one prescribed strategy for all schools. Indeed, one innovation may not be appropriate for more than one situation or context. Where does this leave the change facilitator or school leaders?

The nature of the change is crucial to any change process. The lessons of the '60's and '70's should not, and cannot, be ignored. Pre-planned innovations in "teacher-proof" packages have been resoundingly refuted by teachers and educators. Well intentioned, innovative thinking

was lost because of the complete lack of sensitivity to local needs and ambitions. Daily, subjective realities of teachers within the context of the "classroom press" need to be tempered with the objective realities of the policy makers, innovators and leaders. This was found to create deep, meaningful change. As Fullan clearly cautioned, change without meaning can result in "false clarity" or "painful unclarity." Local school teachers must find meaning in the innovation, or its outcomes, no matter how well intended, will be shelved.

The meaning of change would appear to be linked to how a change is perceived--what its orientations are. Is the typology power-coercive, interactive, empirical-rational, collaborative planning, no planning, or planned change? Perhaps it is more than one of these or none at all. This review concludes that the most useful orientation to take towards a change is one that allowed for "mutual adaptation." The literature was extensive in its support for such typologies. The key seems to be the linking of local teachers with district office personnel where planning and implementation strategies are shared on an equal basis. Teachers at the local level may need to work within a structure where innovations can be modified to accommodate their students and situations. Even so, the research illustrates that the degree of mutual adaptation may vary depending on the structure of the local school (e.g., highly structured schools may be better suited to high-fidelity programs). Finally, what kinds of orientations might provide teachers with the motivation to even consider adapting? Cuban (1988) and Fullan (1991) claimed that the first order changes found in most innovations are found to be lacking. The wave of the future would seem to

be moving towards second order changes that are more complex and that strike at the fundamental belief and value systems of teachers.

Once the innovations and how they are perceived are clarified, the next issue concerns the processes required to implement them. Again, the lessons from the past were evident during the years of "non-implementation." Crucial processes were ignored and most change fell flat, not necessarily because ideas were bad, but because they were dropped off unannounced with the intention and the belief that they'd be "properly" implemented, as if by osmosis. Change was sadly, and often tragically, viewed as an "event" rather than the "process" that it is. As a result, several models were developed with intentions of clarifying and recognizing implementation. What many of them served to do was draw attention to the change process. The three basic phases or stages of the process include initiation (adoption), implementation (brought into use), and continuation (internalization or institutionalization). These are each worthy of volumes of study, but the key idea is that they are not to be viewed in a linear fashion, but as interacting, with one feeding off of and responding to another. Several factors, influences or forces are at play during each of these; however, the success of the process would appear to be linked to the combination of them. Fullan's (1991) model of implementation characteristics appeared to be the most helpful for interpreting the innovation described in this study.

Finally, how can the meaning of change and the change process be best understood by teachers and other educational stakeholders? The literature pointed out that staff development was undergoing serious

restructuring efforts. Many schools function to maintain the status quo in an age when such practices may have dismal consequences for our students. School climates and cultures where teachers share common values, beliefs, goals and attitudes are required to encourage and manage change. This "new" change direction would suggest that schools must develop systems that continually find teachers in roles to initiate and accommodate change. The culture of the school may be the best avenue for creating a self-renewing, forward thinking environment.

This literature review guided the study by providing a foundation for understanding change as it related to the local school context and the Whole Language innovation. How teachers brought meaning to this innovation, what processes they experienced, and what made for successful implementation and continuation was the basis of this study. Four general questions emerged from the literature to help develop the study's purpose:

1. What forces are at play that create subjective meaning for teachers while accommodating the goals and objectives of leaders and innovators?

2. What can change facilitators and leaders attempt to do to create change environments that satisfy the principles of mutual adaptation and second order changes?

3. What factors and what kinds of combinations of factors might lead to more productive outcomes? What influences teachers to adopt an innovation? What strategies do they perceive as useful during implementation?

4. How are successful change cultures developed and what kinds of staff development strategies were recognized by teachers as effective?

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Design of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher perceptions of successful change practices. Because of the nature and intent of this research, an interpretivist methodology was employed. The qualitative research approach described by Bogdan and Biklen's (1982) characteristics of qualitative design was used to carry out the investigation. The source of data was as close to the context of the innovation as possible in the sense that the participants were all practicing teachers with a Whole Language program currently established. The investigator was the interviewer and semi-structured interviews were used to gather pertinent data. The thick description technique was employed using the interview data to capture the thoughts of the teachers. It was hoped that the participants would reveal underlying influences which contributed to successful curriculum changes as they related to the Whole Language innovation. The process and the journey they experienced was studied through an analysis of their descriptions and stories. The major focus was more on how they got from point "A" to "B" in their daily activities than on what the outcomes were. Analysis and reflections on the data were carried out through "bottom-up" strategies allowing for themes to emerge through the voice of the participants. Finally, drawn out of the study were implications and conclusions, developed by the investigator for change facilitators and administrative leaders.

Research Methodology

Sample Selection

Due to the nature of this study, the sampling for the interviews was purposive. Teachers were chosen on the basis of their classroom teaching experiences as they related to the facilitation of better understanding the change process in elementary schools. The participants were teachers in the elementary grades since Education Program Continuity is limited to this level of schooling. Second, the teachers had to have undergone a philosophical shift in their approach to teaching language arts. This shift had to be from the traditional, basal reader, and skills based approach to that of the Whole Language, child-centred teaching, as supported by Education Program Continuity. It was essential that the teachers not only had gone through this process, but that they had done so successfully. This self-proclaimed, philosophical shift by the teacher was of significance to the study since it was this experience that was explored--the study focused on what they perceived as being important contributions before and during the change processes. An attempt was made to seek participants based on their general attitudes towards this innovation. Three types of people, according to Havelock's (1973) research, could be studied: innovators, resisters, and leaders. Based on Havelock's descriptions, they could have the following characteristics:

1. Innovators: Innovators tend to be intelligent and risk-taking. They are quite receptive to external influence and change agents, may be seen as being "mavericks", are highly committed to new ideas, but often are not strongly influential within their staffs.

2. Resisters: Resisters may be seen as critics of innovation. Often times they seek to defend the system the way it is. It is important to note that they do not all "march under the same banner." Their active roles in slowing down and inhibiting change may fall under the guises of those who are radical conservatives to those who are positive preservers of those things that are highly valued in our culture and sub-cultures.

3. Leaders: Opinion leaders are common to most communities and are key agents in the progressive movement of an innovation. They are held in high esteem by the majority of their peers, and have considerable power within their domains. Critical to their position is that they are not usually the first to adopt new ideas, but they carefully listen to both the innovators and the resisters to best size up a situation. They want to observe results of an innovation to analyze its effectiveness, and then when appropriate, adopt new ideas when they are likely to be acceptable to others in the organization.

This attempt at placement of participants into three categories was found to be difficult during the sampling process, and in as much as it may have occurred, it was not planned to the extent that was first intended. Due in part to a further understanding of this study's innovation and its participants, this categorization of teachers was not likely to occur with a change of this nature. For example, resisters did not emerge because all of the teachers voluntarily embraced the innovation. It may have had more relevance with a "planned" change where the participants were not all involved on a volunteer basis.

Fourth, the teachers were located in three schools to determine if there were factors influencing the change that directly related to the school context and culture--to see if the schools played a prominent role in the change process. Seven teachers in three different schools served as the study's participants.

Gaining Access

The "overt" approach, as described by Bogdan and Biklen (1982), was used to gain access to the participants. The investigator happened upon the first school, Green Isle, and three of its teachers through informal and unplanned events. A classmate with a substantial background in Whole Language suggested a school site with three or four possible teachers. She made first contact with the teachers, relaying the study's purpose to them and they simply called her if they were interested. The investigator contacted the willing parties by phone to describe further the nature of the study as well as the background required for those involved. Next, the researcher informed the principal of the study and asked for his permission to include the school site as part of the study. This was quickly and informally affirmed. Further permission from the district office was not required prior to the first interview with the teachers. They were sent a letter outlining the purpose of the study, their role as participants and the ethical obligations of the interviewer.

The second and third schools, Parkhill and Ridgewood, were discovered through contact with their district office. A consultant from district office provided the names of several teachers who she thought might be interested and who also fulfilled the requisites for the study. The

researcher contacted each one individually--first by phone. Two from each school were willing to participate. After initial contact, a letter was provided explaining the study's purpose, outlining the expectations for their involvement and the ethical responsibilities of the interviewer. Further, a formal application was made to the district office to secure approval to conduct interviews with four of their teachers.

After reviewing the selection process the investigator was confident that appropriate measures were taken to assure a credible study. After discussions with other teachers and consultants from the two districts the investigator was confident that the seven participants had the requisite characteristics. Having the awareness that the teachers had changed their teaching beliefs, and the confidence that they had done so successfully were key elements focused upon. That they had experienced a change and came out of it in a very positive manner was very important to this study. The investigator was not as concerned about the degree to which they were actually "Whole Language" teachers since that could not be ascertained in a measurable way, and was not the intent in any case. As discussed earlier, there is not a specific definition for Whole Language; it simply represents a philosophy about teaching and learning. Worthy of mention is that it is this philosophy that the participants believed they had and affirmed they practiced.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Data were collected using semi-structured, open-ended interviews with the participants. The first interview was more open-ended, allowing teachers the opportunity to "tell their tale" so as not to bias the process.

Then questions, or probes, were asked based upon a pre-planned interview guide. The interview guide (see Appendix "A") was based on relevant information from a review of the literature and the context of the innovation being studied--Whole Language. The questions relating to the change process were drawn primarily from Fullan's (1982) fifteen factors that related to implementation of a change. Other questions were designed to address and clarify teachers' perspectives regarding their traditional teaching practices and their current practices reflecting their Whole Language commitments.

A number of procedures were followed during and previous to the interviews. Participants were given the choice of having their data recorded or transcribed by hand. All gave permission to use a tape recorder to enhance the detail of data collection. The interviews took place in schools and teachers' homes to make them feel as comfortable as possible. Before the interview the study's purpose, the participant's role and the investigator's ethical obligations were reviewed. For all the teachers but one there was a follow-up interview to clarify and further explore certain aspects of the first interview and allow for any deletions from the initial interview transcripts, if they so wished. The final transcripts were also shown to the participants so that they could add, delete, or modify any statements that they made. This assisted in clarifying and enriching the data, allowing for "thick description." For personal reasons one teacher was not able to participate in a second interview.

A combination of record collecting devices were used. First, transcripts of the interviews were made from the tape recordings, as

discussed above. At the same time, an anecdotal record book was employed to record any information that may not show up on the tapes, or in the verbatim notes and to enter any additional information, reflections, or thoughts that the interviewer had during and after interviews.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis process applied was similar to that described by Bogdan and Biklen (1982). Transcripts from the participants were assigned letters A-G; page numbers were also assigned for ease of locating data. The material was then read over several times and key words and phrases which captured the concepts and thoughts of the interviewees as they applied to the study's purpose were noted. These became coding categories. The categories were then scrutinized to decide which ones best captured the voice and interpretations of the participants. Each coding category was given a number and recorded each time it emerged from the data. Each unit of data was then given its page number and the letter code of the teacher. The data were then ready for sorting.

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) outline three popular methods for sorting. The method used for sorting most closely matched that of their first approach: the "cut-and-put-in-folders" approach. The categorized data were physically cut up and units of data were sorted into envelopes labeled with the general categories. The folders were then studied and analyzed to develop sub-categories, new categories and modified categories that described both the teachers' intentions and their relationship to the change process. These were written up and interpreted.

As categories and themes emerged from the data, participants were asked in follow-up interviews to clarify areas of uncertainty so that the interpretation could be as accurate as possible. With new data from the second interviews, and from the log book, categories were enriched or modified.

Data Trustworthiness

Four criteria need be be addressed during an interpretivist study to ensure a high degree of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility of the findings was established through structural corroboration, peer debriefing and member checks. Transcripts and the findings of the study were read by the participants to ensure that interpretations were not biased. Findings were reviewed with peers who were knowledgeable about the study's purpose. Interpretations were also discussed with them so that they could be questioned and examined in order to find errors or to develop new insights that might have been missed. Confidence in the "truth" was also gained by reading the transcripts to consciously look for any of the investigator's own bias or neglect in collecting data.

Transferability was attained through purposive sampling and thick descriptions. Participants were chosen according to their backgrounds and experiences so that their experience was consistent with the purpose to this study. The findings were presented with thick description so that the implications and conclusions derived from the data might be comparable to other sites and interviews.

Both dependability and confirmability were ensured through dependability audits, credibility tests, peer debriefing, and member checks. An anecdotal record book was kept and served to record thoughts and ideas that the researcher might have seen as being relevant to the study's purpose, to check interpretations and biases, and to record comments about the data.

Ethical Considerations

Of crucial importance in a study of this type was establishing and sustaining ethical practices and procedures. All teachers were informed prior to the interview what the purpose of the study was. This was done through telephone conversation and through a written document outlining the study's research problem and guiding questions. This was read over and discussed to ensure that participants were clear about the nature of the study.

In the original proposal for this study, procedures were outlined to obtain consent from the participants. The letters to principals were not necessary for Green Isle School as the principal saw no need for the formality. The other two schools required only the consent of the district office and this was obtained through the Cooperative Activities Program. The teachers were asked to let the researcher know at any time during the study if they had any reservations. They all agreed of their own choosing to take part in the study. This was strictly voluntary with no coercion or influence from myself or, to my knowledge, any others.

Prior to the first interview participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at anytime. They were made aware

that in such a case the data gathered from them would be either destroyed or returned to them whether on computer disk, printed paper, or cassette tape.

Confidentiality was assured through the use of secure practices when working with the data. Pseudonyms were used on transcripts while they were in progress, and letter codes used during data analysis. Actual names were replaced on transcripts when sent to the participants. Data was secured safely within the researcher's home. Participants were informed that transcribers may be hired to do some of the typing, and they foresaw no problems with this and gave their consent.

During the final phase of processing the data and writing up the findings, participants were asked if they would rather that pseudonyms or their actual first names be used. They gave their consent to use first names, and so careful consideration was used prior to using direct quotations or other data that might be inappropriately revealing. Again, the teachers were able to read the findings and their transcripts to be sure that nothing was out of context or misrepresentative.

CHAPTER 4

Findings of the Study

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the context in which the study was carried out and to present the findings of the study. These findings are grouped into nine categories which emerged from the analysis of the data. Much of the research literature supports the assumption that "change" is a process and that certain forces come into play at varying times during this process. The interviews which produced the data for this study were structured to explore these possible forces as identified by Fullan (1982). The model, developed by Fullan and described earlier in this thesis, was used to structure the interview questions. Therefore, to add clarity to the data, it will be presented within this same framework. The four phases of the change process identified by Fullan (1991) which are used to present the interview data include (a) initiation, (b) implementation, (c) continuation and (d) outcomes. Due to the close parallels and interaction between implementation and continuation, those two phases are merged into one for the purpose of presenting the findings of this study.

Before the findings are reported the context of the study will be described as follows: (a) an introduction to the situational context including the three sites and the seven participants in this study, and (b) the teachers' perspectives on their initial language arts teaching practices.

Situational Context

The study involved three school sites in north-central Alberta. The schools are given the following pseudonyms: Green Isle, Parkhill, and Ridgewood. All three schools are elementary schools with stable student enrollments under five hundred.

Green Isle School

Green Isle is located in a small, charming town thirty kilometres from a major Alberta city. The area is surrounded with successful farms and is close enough to the city to provide varied career possibilities for its residents. It has the distinguishing feature of being a rural, community school with a charter. The school has under 15 teaching staff and an enrollment of under 300 in grades ECS to 4. Green Isle School is represented in this study by three teachers: Judy, Becky, and Sharon. Each of them have been in the teaching profession for over ten years and has spent the majority of that time in elementary assignments--more specifically, in primary grades. All three have had extensive experience teaching language arts and most other subjects that usually make-up the elementary school program.

Parkhill

Along an attractive, winding, suburban residential road in a small, but flourishing city is the school of Parkhill. Its staff of twelve is responsible for about two hundred seventy students in grades ECS to four. Its neighborhood consists of a successful, middle-class population with

another school situated right beside it. Two teachers that took part in this study practice in this school--Jenny and Sandra. They both teach grade one and are responsible for most of the subjects for the class. They have both taught for more than ten years and bring with them extensive experience in teaching language arts. They have both had varied primary assignments and have taught in a variety of schools. They have been in Parkhill for over five years.

Ridgewood

Located in the same small city as Parkhill, Ridgewood is situated in a similar middle-class neighborhood. The teaching staff of eighteen is responsible for about four hundred students in grades ECS to six. Marilyn and Maryann, from this school, agreed to participate in the study. They have both taught for over ten years and both have had extensive experience with language arts teaching in the primary grades. Marilyn has had experience in all primary grades, and has worked as a consultant for the district office. Maryann is teaching in primary grades in Ridgewood School, and has had varied homeroom positions ranging from grade one to five, Trainable Mentally Handicapped (TMH) programs, special needs students, severely handicapped students, and autistic students to serving as a vice-principal for an elementary school.

Although the research at each of the three school sites yielded insight into the change process, the data will not be categorized according to the sites, unless significant differences emerge.

Teacher Perceptions of their Traditional Language Practices

The teachers recall their practices before the change to Whole Language as being very traditional. When asked about the "old" days they all had very similar recollections, but some had stronger and clearer recollections than did others. It was felt by some that even though they taught in a traditional manner, they still had aspects of their programs or beliefs that were more child-centered. Judy recalled, "The philosophy wasn't there in my mind, but my natural instinct as a teacher was in a Whole Language way--try to adjust to meet the needs of the children." Marilyn related that

> I was always very uncomfortable with the workbook and with the way the readers were laid out and the stereotypes that were in them. And the kind of cultures that were in them. They were very culture biased, very white, middle class. There was no room for much else and I saw that as being really bad. . . . I guess I felt even then that things shouldn't necessarily be separated into neat little boxes. That real life is kind of integrated and maybe that would be the way to go.

Although there may have been these feelings by some that they were less than satisfied in their traditional practices, most teachers still had quite different programs than they do now. The responses tended to focus upon the reading program, writing program, and skill development. Judy explained her program in this way:

> Then as I became more of an experienced teacher, I became more traditional because a lot of it was just looking at my peers and seeing what they were doing and saying I guess that's what I should do. . . . But then I became your typical, very traditional, workbook, 'follow-

> the-teacher-guide' type of teacher with your reading groups and everything was isolated. There was your phonics lesson and then your spelling lesson and it wasn't tied together. The children didn't have a lot of opportunity to write.

Sandra had a similar view of her past:

> I kind of insisted on having a quiet room and not an awful lot of movement. . . . a lot of it was workbook and worksheets. You followed the manual per se and it was given to you for your reading theory and you went through the readers story by story never skipping ahead, never leaving any out. I think, basically, the kids read to you, sort of round-robin-type reading. We never read the story first to them. We took the story and broke it up into parts before we ever talked about it and after you'd broken it up into parts and everybody had done their little bit of reading, then you discussed it as a whole. . . . And very little writing, mainly answering sentences and some of the phonic-type sheets. But very little creative writing on their own.

Jenny described her past methods in the same way and adds that "I'd guide them through the story. Like, it must have been awfully frustrating. They very rarely got to read anything without me interrupting and telling them to look for something." She continued by explaining that expectations were different: "We had lots of workbooks, lots of worksheets. We did phonics, printing separately . . . nobody really expected children to do much writing at all in grade one." Becky described her use of this same procedure by reliving her experiences in applying her past traditional philosophy:

> The set-up before using this approach was reading groups, and we felt we were trying to accommodate students needs through those groups. Subjects were separated. More of a thinking that you were teaching reading comprehension through a workbook and think that you're teaching reading through a basal reader. The whole idea of the basal reader and when kids would come in initially you would teach them the letters and the sounds and that's how the basal reader

> went along. And so of course the part to whole . . . introducing the story first and so you're changing the meaning of reading. . . in the past reading was just saying the words, and reading didn't have a lot of rich content.

This "old" approach, much like her own, made Maryann think of the students:

> What a dumb thing to do! Never gave a kid a chance to use any of the things that we were trying to teach the kids to do. At first I taught them phonics, the sounds, and then I gave them the words so they never had a chance to use any of those, or use context clues or comprehension skills at all.

Maryann remembers that then the students, as well as the teachers, seemed to have different roles than they do now. The basic rows of desks with the teacher at the front of the class seemed to be the usual standard. Students were expected to stay in their desks and the room was to be very quiet. The student's role was simply to absorb the teacher's lessons. Marilyn stated that "You had all the answers and you filled their little minds with all the right information, and that was in some way what being educated meant back in the '60's." Marilyn captured more of this mind-set:

> I cringe sometimes when I think of what I really encouraged kids to do. . . there was a lot of me being in control suggesting the subjects, the topics. . . not giving them a lot of practice, a lot of time to make mistakes, but demanding too much perfection at the beginning. Everything had to be correct. Red pencilling lots of stuff. I mean that's so negative when I think about it now.

Perhaps in summarizing the past instructional practices of these teachers, Maryann put it best: "When we first started out teaching . . . we had a different attitude about learning. I'm not saying that I don't think we didn't learn, because I think those kids I had learned. But it was a different focus on learning."

All seven teachers interviewed seem to be very committed teachers and all would agree that, as Maryann stated, in the past their students learned and they did their best as teachers. Yet it is obvious to them that at some point in their career the teaching philosophy and methodologies were substantially different than today. The curriculum was different and the needs of the students were different. Even during the traditional period their teaching was viewed as very solid and was widely accepted; and even with the voices of change on their doorsteps and, for some of them creeping into their consciousness, they were still effective in the context of the past.

Initiation

The seven teachers discussed their motivations for becoming involved in the Whole Language innovation and adopting it as part of their teaching repertoire. As Fullan (1991) and Huberman & Miles (1984) recognized, there are always many varied and, often times, interacting variables at work during the initiation stage. How did the teachers realize that the change was right for them? What types of things did they do to embrace the innovation and start the journey? The findings point to four such forces that had an impact on the teachers decisions to invite the innovation into their classrooms: (a) it makes sense to the students, (b) it makes sense for the teachers, (c) perceptions of the change during the first step, and (d) teacher commitment to growth and the change process.

It Makes Sense to the Students

One recurring theme that emerged from the data was the learning situation for students. Several teachers, after reflecting on their teaching and the curriculum, came to the conclusion that their students were not gaining enough from the traditional language arts program. The staff at Green Isle School realized this, but it really set-off alarms for Becky through one event in particular:

> I really remember the one example that said to me, 'I've got to make some changes here. I'd have to find a way to make some changes.' A student that said to me -- he had lots of difficulties, . . . learning to read, and he said 'Mrs. _____ can we just skip the story today and just do the workbook?' He made no connection between the fact that the workbook was supposed to be an extension of the reading activity. He made no connection and I thought, 'Wow!' Yet, he could complete the workbook. You're not supposed to be able to complete the workbook until you understand the story! But he just said he could do the workbook pages without reading the story. And he had fun doing those kind of things. So I knew there had to be some kind of changes.

Becky related other anecdotes that reflected the dissatisfaction she had with the way students were learning. The experiences made her frustrated and created an awareness of the need for change: "I mean I found the reason I had to change was because I found the kids weren't learning to read." The same kind of awareness developed within Judy. She reflected upon the students arriving in grade one and how her focus drifted away from instructional time:

> I was spending an awful lot of time and energy in classroom management because you'd get a good class but then you'd get a class, especially a lot of boys, that weren't ready to read at the grade one level. All of a sudden they come from Kindergarten that is

> always center-based and always gave the children choices to all of a sudden structured grade one, sitting in desks, sitting in rows, workbooks--15 minutes is up, move on to this kind of thing, or 25 minutes is up so move on to this. . . . We'd do the same kinds of things in the classroom--we weren't really meeting the needs of all the children. . . The children were telling me--they knew it a long time before I did what was appropriate and what wasn't. . . . Not all the children were achieving and not all the children--they felt like failures before they even started.

Sharon at Green Isle School agreed that the "old" ways just didn't suffice and that she would try to "key" in on the students and their interests. Other teachers had similar feelings. Marilyn at Ridgewood School reported her recollections of her past program:

> I couldn't see the way it was being done, being very productive. It just seemed like I was always dealing with the same kind of issues and the same kinds of problems and not really seeing any substantial growth, change, and development. . . . We were just teaching rules and the right way to do things, and correct spelling and the kids never had a chance to experience the process, to learn by making mistakes and struggling a little bit.

Marilyn continued with thoughts about the stifling structure of school and the lack of interaction with students in meaningful ways. Students weren't supposed to ask a lot of questions and teachers didn't ask for their ideas. Marilyn's colleague in Ridgewood, Maryann, described similar motivations for change: "I knew something was wrong. I didn't like what was going on in some ways. I can remember that we had these language books 'Was and Were' and they had to fill in 'was' and 'were'. And when they wrote out sentences the very next day they never used it the right way, and I thought, 'This is not right.'" Her realizations prompted some action: "And I myself threw that out because I thought that was dumb. But I could see it didn't work."

Other teachers did not focus so much on what didn't work, but were equally as excited about what would improve their student's learning. Jenny at Parkhill School recognized the importance of a program that is more "appropriate for the kids." The children "were reading more, reading different things, they were more excited about what they were doing, reading was exciting to them." Sandra, from Parkhill also, explained that she remembered doing a lot of child-centred things before, but just didn't know what it was called. But she was pleased to observe that "the kids were liking school. They were reading well." Not only did she start noticing improved reading, but "it made school more fun for the kids." And when it comes down to it, that's the bottom line for several teachers. They began to follow their instincts and experiment with different things. The motivation to change and adopt more of the Whole Language methodology into their rooms came from small successes at the start. Sharon explained, "The more I did it, the more it worked, and the more I felt good about it." Marilyn first had a feeling that the kids needed to be more involved in their own learning. She soon began to notice changes after trying to encourage in them an "enthusiasm and an interest in learning for its own sake."

> The kids were more interested. They were more enthusiastic about certain kinds of things. They weren't as easily frustrated. There began to be a better sense from them that this might be something that they should be good at, that they should have success at, that they were succeeding at, that they were enjoying.

Maryann observed that the pressure to change to Whole Language was coming from somewhere, but she wasn't sure where. This pressure

alone would not have made her make her transition "if I didn't think it would work. But it does work!" The anecdote below illustrates her point:

> You've got a little kid that's coming in and everybody's got him targeted as a child coming in from kindergarten and probably won't be able to do anything that whole year and he can go home and take a book home to his parents; boy, I tell you I've got P.R. like you wouldn't believe from parents because they're reading. They'll come to school and say, 'He's reading!' I love it!

Becky too found her experimenting worked and realized that she accepted the philosophy because of "the impact that it was going to have on students. And the impact that it did. That's what kept it going." Sharon found that her beginning changes had a similar impact on her students: "I found that by making school interesting by keying into the kids' ideas and thoughts, you could capture them and get them going and loving it maybe."

So the students' needs and the teacher's reflective practices identifying these needs played a significant role in their initiation of Whole Language. As Sandra so accurately stated: "I think my philosophy as a teacher is I'll do what works with the kids and I really don't care what they call it."

It Makes Sense to the Teacher and it Fits

The second influence affecting whether the teachers made the choice to embrace a new innovation includes more personal factors. These were found to vary somewhat with each teacher, but had enough overlap and emphasis to suggest that it was an important category to study. Many of the comments seemed to emphasize the place where the teachers were at

and how they perceived their readiness to change--the extent to which the change made sense to them.

Judy teaching in Green Isle School remembered her very sobering thoughts on where she was at before her adoption of the Whole Language philosophy. After reflecting on her highly structured, workbook, guidebook approach, she explained

> I really came to the point that I thought 'What makes me the teacher compared to parents that would come in and help?' I was getting really frustrated and I thought there's got to be something better. . . Either there's something wrong with me and maybe it's time to look at a different career--I really thought about that. I wasn't happy and I realized that if I was feeling frustrated and getting to be that really uptight kind of teacher and that was the kind I had as a kid and I just hated.

Judy claimed that a big step in her transition to Whole Language originated with this self-evaluation, looking at herself as a teacher and asking if she was happy. "Perhaps I'd still be struggling along, or left the profession," Judy claimed as she recalled her process of self-reflection. "I'd say I'm probably harder on myself now than I was then [prior to the change], but at least I was looking enough within myself to question what was happening in that not all the children were achieving."

Sharon had feelings at Green Isle that seemed to correspond with Judy's in that she tried to teach in that certain traditional way for so many years, and "I could never get it through and now I've got it this way and it just seems a better way." The frustration seemed quite prevalent in Green Isle. Judy recalled that she began talking more and more with other teachers; they were frustrated like she was, and were "sick and tired of the same stories that I got sick and tired of." The feelings of frustration were

present in other schools as well. For example, Marilyn in Ridgewood School claimed, "I just found that [way of teaching] very frustrating and I just wanted to be very involved with them [students] in real learning not just surface stuff." The real motivation for Marilyn came from "a really great dissatisfaction in me with how things were being done back then. . . . It really came from inside of me." She added that "I wasn't happy using that very structured system and I think that I used to go to a lot of workshops and inservices in those days. . . . so I was very open to that kind of thing. . . . I wanted some kind of not so rigid structure. I wanted a little more flexibility. I wanted to put a little bit of myself into that curriculum planning."

Although levels of frustration and anxiety about how students were progressing were catalysts for some, feelings that the newer approach made more sense was a motivation for others. Sometimes, as might be expected, these two seemed to interact. As Marilyn was experiencing levels of frustration so was she beginning to make her own materials and centres because it made more sense to her to make learning an exciting and challenging journey, and it made more sense for her to do the things that she was more comfortable with.

At Parkhill School Jenny suggested that she had done many of the things that were encouraged by the Whole Language approach and that she began to do them even more because they "make more sense." Her belief is that "you've got to do what works for you and what *fits* [my emphasis] in with our own teaching style and classroom instruction style. . . . Maybe if it doesn't fit them, it wouldn't necessarily fit the kids as well if they were

trying to be made to do it." After looking into the Whole Language philosophies Jenny again emphasized that "it just seemed to make more sense." Her colleague Sandra agreed, but added that the innovation requires her own proof that "it works for me in that classroom." Over in Ridgewood School Maryann made the same comment: "So some of those things I was sort of doing because it seemed reasonable. . . . because it just made sense to me." Becky came to the same realization as did other teachers in Green Isle. After reading through some of the Whole Language research, "it seemed to make more sense." The need for the change, then, hinged upon how well it "fit" a teacher's perception of how the class should be taught--did it make sense?

The innovation can "fit" with a teacher in other ways as well. Sandra in Parkhill described three reasons: for her, it was easier to teach; it's more interesting and fun to teach; and she felt a sense of duty after being away from teaching to begin a family. "The onus was on me to figure out what was going on." As well, she admitted that there was some pressure to keep abreast of changes since, at that time, her contract was not yet permanent. She was also concerned about having a sound knowledge of the program. However, at the same time she remarked that the excitement of the writing is an attractive feature of the program.

Maryann concurred that enjoying it yourself is half the battle because if "I can't have fun in the classroom nobody else is." Enjoyment for Maryann came from doing new things that were good for the kids and seeing the kids enjoy them. She believes that "the more I did it, the more it worked, and the more I felt good about it." As well, Maryann admitted

that "basically I like to change," and "the main reason was that it just was a part of me already, and I just felt freer to do it all." Judy noted two other reasons for wanting to change. Her school was receiving a new reading series based on Whole Language and she wanted to know more about the philosophy. In addition, when she was a student she didn't enjoy school, and she didn't want to turn into "that" kind of a teacher. "I wanted to make a difference, [be] more positive, so I keep working towards that goal."

The personal and professional reasons for changing would seem to be varied and individualistic. Perhaps one aspect of this change that may be worth mention is that no one identified an external force or pressure from above. Maryann described a pressure, but it was not from any identifiable source. As Jenny stated, however, "I don't know how I would have coped if I hadn't wanted to do any of those things and someone had come along to me and said, 'This is a sign of the times. You have to do it this way.' . . . Then I would have felt totally different." I think the other teachers, as will be presented in the outcome stage, would have similar feelings. Each motive, however individualistic, is an important force that encouraged the push towards Whole Language teaching. The initiation had begun.

Perceptions of the First Step

> *You cannot blackball anything until you know something about it, and you can't say it's great until you know something about it. So that was the 'in' thing; so I went.* (Maryann)

> *It was kind of like going down a dark passage not knowing whether I was doing what I was supposed to be doing, and it was nice to know that this is the normal thing to do.* (Jenny)

After teachers recognized the needs of their students and their own personal motives for beginning their journey, they stepped into the change, and some even jumped in. This section presents their beginnings and some of the accompanying feelings about the change. Once again, the data demonstrates that some processes were similar for most of the seven teachers while others were ideosyncratic. It is hard in some instances to divide the initiating phases from the implementing phase, and as Fullan (1991) reminds us, the different phases of the process are always interacting and do not represent a one way linear progression. Experimentation, professional development activities, interaction with significant others and research on current practices are described by the teachers.

Becky, from Green Isle School, recalled that the need for change came at the same time she was finishing a course at the university. She was enrolled in a language arts curriculum course with an instructor from a neighboring school system. This course served as a springboard for her journey. "People would keep asking her [the instructor], 'What is this whole language stuff?' And that was back in about '84/'85, and that's when she [the instructor] started to talk about it. That was kind of my first introduction to it." During the course, the students had an assignment in which they had to think of the very first story that they can remember

reading and reflect upon their feelings about it now. It was especially during this time that Becky began thinking about Whole Language, and was introduced to it. But this was still happening "at a different level" as compared to at the classroom level. So "I started to experiment with things like the writing process and really felt close to those students." The learning began for Becky as she took her first step towards the innovation within her class--taking ideas from her course at university and slowly integrating them into the school. Another important step was the initiation of a support group by a curriculum consultant in her school. Some of the other teachers, including Judy, decided that they were going to make this change, and "I came in and I was fully supportive. I really wanted to do that." Becky complemented the discussions with her peers with professional reading. "I think that's why we were successful because we tried to balance that [theory and practice] and we did try to provide some theory for parents."

Judy also took some important steps to overcome her disgruntled state of teaching in Green Isle School, which she described as being akin to a cookbook. "Read the guidebook. . . and do what it says." She found herself gazing across the hall at school one day and focusing in on Donna. Donna taught grade one and like the other teachers at Green Isle, was going through some changes in her teaching style. The School Division each year pre-orders for the teachers a class set of workbooks to accompany the readers, but the teachers were not convinced they needed, or wanted, these anymore. As described above, they no longer seemed to meet the needs of the students. So after observing some things Donna was doing instead of

using the workbooks, Judy decided to talk to Donna about it. Eventually a small group of teachers informally met and talked on different occasions about the same concerns. "We had the same frustrations, in that they got sick and tired of the same stories that I got sick and tired of. . . . We'd do the same kinds of things in the classroom -- we weren't really meeting the needs of all the children. There were children that were coming to Grade one that weren't ready to read and yet you start giving them a workbook." After the teachers openly discussed problems they were having, the transition began for Judy. "I started looking and I started going to workshops. Well, as soon as I signed up for a workshop there was no stopping me. I was so excited by what I saw. It was exactly what I was looking for." From here Judy and a group of teachers ventured down to an International Reading Association (IRA) conference in Vancouver. "I came back so excited. I went into the principal and I said, 'I'm going to make changes. I'm not going to throw the baby out with the bathwater, but I am going to start making some changes.'" As she thought back she emphasized the importance of reading the books of whole language proponents, but also remembered her desire to see and hear them at conferences to really add clarity and depth. "It has just evolved from there."

Sharon, another member of the Green Isle staff, remembered taking her first steps in both her present school and former schools. She first found herself placed in a grade three class and isolated from the rest of the school in a portable. It was here that she found she needed "time to get away from the whole group--the lecture type thing, and I began to use

ideas of centres." After this she transfered to another school where she found herself in a unique position providing help to those students who required it. She was allowed to enter many classrooms and work with the students right in their homeroom classes. She claimed that "that freedom kind of introduced me to things that I wanted to do when I got my own classroom. . . . So being in other classrooms, being around other teachers, being out in the portable, I finally said to heck with it, I'm a good enough teacher, I'm going to go with it." As well, Sharon recalled the influence of the other teachers like Judy who went to the conference in Vancouver. They provided a boost as did a fellow grade four teacher across the hall: "We found we worked really well together." So they both began to implement the new reading series, which they were not too enthused about due to its structure. Then they began to discuss their strategies and solve their problems.

For Sandra and Jenny at Parkhill School the beginning stages were low key and very gradual. Sandra received much of her start from a former colleague in Saskatchewan. She conversed with her about some of the new changes and received literature from her as well. Jenny's beginnings were quite internal and mostly came from her own resources including working through the new reading series that had a Whole Language base. Jenny approached the change with the attitude of "Well, let's have a look at this and see if it is as wonderful as the literature." Some of her first experiences included inservices put on by the publishers of the new reading series. She stressed that she eased into it quite slowly and may have done it earlier had someone "come along and said, 'We are

looking at a big change to Whole Language--this is what it means and this is how it works.'" Jenny also got some books on the topic and began to do some research of her own which led to creating more child centered activities like experience charts and big books, and gave her ideas for her writing program. She was involved with a writing program inservice put on by her school district and, although its impact was not heavy, it did tie in quite neatly with her other developments in reading and writing. A significant thought of Jenny's summarized her initiation neatly: "I don't remember walking into my classroom any one morning and saying 'I am a whole language teacher.'. . . It was very gradual. This will work better. I'll try doing this, and eventually changes take place." The process started gradually and continued much the same way. Although Sandra spoke less of her adoption experiences, it would seem to be much the same process with her.

Marilyn and Maryann in Ridgewood School had experiences similar to those of Sandra and Jenny. They were involved in professional reading to see what the research was saying while at the same time experimenting with various aspects of their programs. Marilyn recalled that after reflecting on her dissatisfaction with the "old" ways of teaching, she started developing a lot of center units that served to begin integrating the various skills in language arts. She searched for different kinds of materials to supplement her program and began to learn a lot from other teachers on her staff who eventually became her mentors. "I learned a lot from them and added my own input to that and what I began to do was to develop a lot of my own materials." Marilyn pointed out that through her

experimenting she had to give herself "permission to fail occasionally and that was really hard because things didn't work out sometimes." Along the same lines of thought, she talked about her instincts and their importance: "I think I leaned to trust myself more. To trust my feelings about things. And learned to trust my own feelings about the kids, and where they were and what they needed." This was a gradual process. Marilyn believed that this trust only comes with experience.

Maryann started her transition with much the same story. She experimented and did small bits first with the feeling that "I'll do a little more. Or if it doesn't work then I can throw it out and say 'Well, I knew before I even started it would never work.'" She compared her first experiences with this change with one she is presently encountering with cooperative learning: "And so I sort of went with my heels kicking all the way in. Anyway I think maybe that's the same way as I probably approached Whole Language thinking about it. You have to show me that some of it is going to work. I'll try it!" As it turned out, she was doing a lot of things that coincided with her reading and research. As possibilities presented themselves she'd learn more to see how to do things. A curiosity about what Whole Language was kept her motivated, but the successes with the students cemented it.

All the teachers described some form of experimentation and professional development during initiation. Another emergent theme from the data was teacher feelings during these sometimes emotional transitions. Not surprisingly, there were differences among them, supporting further the finding that initiation can be very personal and subjective. At the same

time, there are some common threads of reaction to this innovation that can be categorized according to positive feelings and unfavorable feelings towards the change. It should be mentioned that although there were some unfavorable feelings, this should not be interpreted as a negative influence. As part of the greater process it will be seen that the teachers viewed them as an important part of the process.

Unfavorable feelings. The unfavorable feelings described by some teachers included frustration, insecurity and fear. Judy recalled that during the change, even though she had the support of other colleagues, the staff felt very much on their own "and it's scary in a lot of ways. At the same time, you're working with so many elements. . . . You're making changes in the classroom, making sure the administrators knew what you're doing, and so they would come in and watch. And at the same time you had to start educating the parents in the changes." This created a lot of tension and some insecurity on staff, although Judy claimed it originated from within--"I hope I'm doing the right thing." In the same school, Becky too experienced the fear because "you're moving away from the security of that book with that guide. It allowed you more freedom, but it seemed you had to be. . . accountable to those parents." Maryann, when first beginning her initiation phase, admitted that she was "scared stiff" because "I think they made too big a thing out of it [Whole Language]. . . . It seemed almost like this big cloud that was hanging over our head that we had to jump into this and that was it." Maryann could not identify where this fear was coming from exactly because there was no influential person telling her to change or pressuring her to, but it was a feeling that the staff

and other teachers seemed to have as well: "I don't know why we got this feeling that it was so different and so scary." Another type of fear that Maryann felt was for other teachers and perhaps the whole innovation because she sensed that some authors and proponents of Whole Language didn't do enough research to clarify what it really was or meant. The movement came with a lot of teachers not understanding it, and promoting it with an "almost pie in the sky philosophy." She felt that misconceptions needlessly were started this way, and she had some of her own: "So I thought well, if this is what they really mean then I can never teach phonics again; they're not going to learn their sounds." These insecure feelings and fears are natural though for teachers according to Maryann because "we are working in a field where you don't really [know] those results that you can see today or tomorrow or the next day." Becky recognized other feelings of insecurity that arose due to isolation. Before transferring back to Green Isle (Becky was gone for a year) she described her situation in another school in the same jurisdiction.

> From talking to a lot of other teachers I think they feel that they are alone out there and don't have support, especially initially. And I guess that at first I did feel that way. . . . I don't think I was as comfortable in the approach and there were lots of other teachers too that didn't know where you were coming from when you started to sit down and say what about this? Have you ever tried this? They weren't comfortable.

Further, Becky felt like she was sometimes billed as a rebel or radical because most of the other teachers were very traditional, as was the principal. She also admitted with a laugh she didn't mind the title.

Jenny never seemed to feel like a radical in her school, but had some feelings associated with insecurity. She would have liked to have had more inservices or other kinds of acknowledgements that what she was doing was acceptable instead of "just trying it and hoping, and reading by myself. . . . It was kind of like going down a dark passage not knowing whether I was doing what I was supposed to be doing, and it was nice to know that this is the normal thing to do." As well, she felt some fear when experimenting with her writing program because it was such a large section to be changing at one time. The fear would give way to frustration as she claims, "I had a really hard time following that [the writing program] through and I finally realized maybe if I just did it the way it worked for me, it would be OK."

Marilyn also experienced frustration. She explained that frustration was a part of her experimenting process which was not just a "simple transition." There was a lot of "trying things out, and a lot of failure, and revising, rethinking things." This road was a struggle at times and besides being unsure of the new innovation, she felt guilty about it as well because she wasn't sure if she was covering the program as she should be. Marilyn noted that the training she had made this a difficult task, but with time things became more comfortable.

Favorable feelings. Feelings of comfort and other positive responses including excitement, enthusiasm, involvement and confidence about the change also emerged from the data. In fact, when Sharon finally got her own classroom in Green Isle she claimed she had no concerns about the innovation. Her confidence was built by her own trust in herself, the

enthusiasm brought in with the changes, and the "bandwagon" effect it had on staff: "I think it was basically the enthusiasm of the other teachers." This had the effect of creating excitement in her teaching and in her students.

In the same school, both Becky and Judy felt the same excitement as did Jenny in Parkhill. Judy was excited after going to her first couple of conferences and couldn't wait to get back to her classroom to begin making some changes. Becky found that just the restructuring process and changing of mind-sets--in fact, the change process itself--is exciting: "I see those kinds of things as exciting, but that's the kind of person I am." In Parkhill School Jenny was feeling some of the excitement because "it was something new and something different. It was a challenge, yes. But is was a challenge that seemed to be succeeding. . . . I certainly was more enthusiastic about it."

It seemed that as the teachers gained more success with their initial trials, they became more confident and assured that what they were doing was right. Judy said that you have to stay relaxed and "get away from that mindset that I'm being evaluated everytime I have somebody with me." Jenny noted that she was happier about the results she was seeing, which were the kids enjoying themselves. Becky, even after realizing that there was some fear present, was also comfortable because she felt very natural going into the change. Sandra admitted that she too felt assuredness with the new resources, but only because she is "not easily bought and sold on anything. . . . I have to see lots of success with it before someone is going to convince me that it's going to work." So Sandra was quite sure that the

changes she was beginning to accept were best for the children. Sharon expressed a similar confident view that "I'm going to go ahead and do this. . . because it's my own judgement that I think I'm a better teacher doing it this way." Perhaps much of the confidence in these teachers came from their involvement in the process, as Judy espoused after considering her feelings about their school's simultaneous change to a community school: "I felt very much involved in the change process. . . . All the stakeholders had a say." The "grass roots" motivation, experience of the teachers, and their trust in their own judgements created a sense of "doing the right thing for the right reasons."

Teacher Commitment to Growth and the Change Process

The final influence on the initiation process--teacher commitment to growth and change--is deep enough and pervasive enough that it obviously carries over into all stages and phases. To single it out in this phase is somewhat unjust, but its influence may be most powerful during this crucial stage. Every teacher commented in some way about their attitude towards change. Some may call it personality, but the commitment to innovative ideas is clearly part of each teacher's mind-set. Three broad descriptions were used as teachers discussed their attitudes to change: growth as evolution, change as a professional responsibility, and seeking change continually. Not all teachers commented on each, but generally two or three talked within the contexts of each theme.

To several of the teachers, the change process is an evolving one that is ongoing and continual. Marilyn claimed "I don't think the change process happened and then was over for me. It was a continual process for

me; I'm still going through it you know." Becky described this process in a cyclical fashion stating that you practice things, look at the theory behind why you are doing it, change your teaching, then practice again. The cycle continues with innovations. When asked if anyone introduced the Whole Language innovation to Maryann, she remarked that "I think it just evolved." Her premise is that "if you never tried anything you'd never know." Perhaps the teacher that most emphasized the "evolution" concept was Judy. She claims that her understanding of Whole Language concepts and practices, use of parent volunteers, her feelings about the innovation, and her teaching in the classroom have all evolved. Judy emphasized her view of learning as a "continuum." She noted that in her class next year she would be even different than this year because of her continual growing and changing: "I don't think I'm at the end of the road in any way. There's still a lot more out there to research." These teachers clearly see "changes" as a never ending evolutionary process.

Three teachers saw the change process as a part of their professional responsibilities as teachers. Maryann claimed that "I don't think any of us can stay the same and be any kind of a teacher. You have to grow." Sandra supported this assertion saying that "I think as a teacher, you naturally want to keep up with things and as a professional person, it's your duty to sort of explore the new things that are coming out or you'll be left behind. . . . " and "if you didn't [change], you'd be a very unhappy person I think, because you have to change in order to keep the kids interested." Judy was quite adamant that it's your job to stay knowledgeable and competent because it opens your doors as a teacher, and once again that "to

be a good teacher, you have to be a competent learner." Judy claimed that she is always evaluating herself and looking inward, and that she is probably harder on herself now than she was at the start of the process. These self-evaluations and continued learning practices are strongly encouraged by all three teachers because for them change is part of their duty as good teachers.

The final perspective on teacher commitment to growth finds teachers that actively seek out new ideas and practices to keep themselves happy and excited. Evidence of these feelings are found in Maryann's expressions: "I like to change. . . . You have to grow. And so I look for things all the time." She believed that because of her personality she has to know what is going on in education circles: "If there's a change, I have to know." Jenny claimed that she's always changing things because there's always something that she's not satisfied with, so each year she tries something different. Marilyn commented that she handles change well and believes that it is important to do so. She sees change in education as very positive and needed and says, "I think that's exciting." Sharon is quite convinced that her search for change is an absolute necessity. "I'm bored with something old. I'm always on the search for something new. . . . I don't think you do it by following a plan you made last year. . . . It [change] just happens, you know. Always wanting to do something new each year, always wanting to change something. It just happens because you are looking for that change. . . . Change is always good." These teachers are convinced that change needs to be sought out, and its result is very positive for them and their students.

Seeking out changes, growing as professionals and evolving with new innovations were all symptomatic of the healthy outlook these teachers have on change. Their attitudes and personalities would seem to offer an inviting context for new ideas and innovations. It may be personality, positive experiences with change, or professional attitudes, but clearly they are all committed to growing and changing on a continuing basis. Maintainers of the status-quo they're not.

Summary of Initiation

The successes of taking small experimental steps, independent research reviews of current literature, professional development activities, and help from some significant others influenced each teacher's initiation and first steps to Whole Language. Strong feelings were experienced during the process of initiation, both unfavorable and positive. Of prime importance were each teacher's perceptions of the worth of the program for her students and how well it "fit" in with her own beliefs and methods. Perhaps an underlying theme of the entire initiation process was the teachers' commitment to growth and change, creating a positive attitude for continued innovative thinking. It must be stated again that these are by no means the only forces acting on these teachers, and they do not stop at the initiation stage. In fact they would seem to prepare the stage for the next phase of implementation. Further, the forces that are described below in implementation/continuation had significant influences during initiation as well. The process is a two way continuum and it would seem to be unwise to select any one influence and attach it to only one phase. The forces described above will certainly impact on those below and vice versa. The

teachers' experiences seem to take on a cyclical nature, yet some forces are more prevalent than others at different stages.

Implementation / Continuation

As explained earlier the processes that were occurring during initiation did not necessarily stop there. Most continued into the next phases as well. However, in these later stages various other forces are described that appeared to have had their greatest impact during implementation and continuation. This does no imply that they had no impact on initiation. That is highly unlikely. The influences that emerged from the data include (1) the collegial relations, (2) professional development, (3) significant others, (4) the principal, (5) the community school, (6) parents, (7) central office, and (8) technical aspects including time, resources, and barriers to the change.

These eight themes are ordered according to the emphasis they seemed to receive during implementation. However, without a doubt, the most recurring theme in the research was that of collegiality.

Collegial Influence

In all three school sites and with all the seven teachers interviewed, it was unanimous that peers had direct and major influence on implementation. This influence took two general forms: the team approach and situational collegial influences.

The team influence.

There's sharing. . . Somebody will say, 'Oh, I'm doing dinosaurs,' and they don't even have to say anything more than that and

everybody is pulling out their files and shoving the stuff across to them. (Sharon)

I remember at one point we were all out in the hallway hugging one another. (Judy)

The team of teachers at Green Isle made up a peer group that together had a great and lasting impact on their success with the Whole Language innovation. The team assisted in the implementation by acting in numerous roles, but the three with the greatest impact appear to be the role of support, the role of sharing, and participation in professional development sessions.

Judy recalled that the Green Isle staff was always a tight knit group even in the days of being traditional teachers. The principal had always promoted the concept that the staff share and he encouraged team teaching. "So we were always talking and looking and seeing what one another were doing, so we didn't have our doors closed, even though we were traditional teachers." Becky became aware of this attribute as soon as she came back to Green Isle. "So they had a kind of rapport set up between them. . . . They were glad to see I was coming back as the grade two teacher." This characteristic of the school had a wonderful impact. It had acted as a catalyst to begin the change process. Judy noted, "And because we were always connected that way in talking, as we started to have frustrations, we had the same frustrations, in that they got sick and tired of the same stories that I got sick and tired of." The teachers together realized a change was required to better meet the needs of the students. Informal meetings were organized. Becky reviewed their purpose:

> We had no formal agendas. We would kind of write down a couple of things we'd want to talk about next time. . . . It was just if you needed to talk that [that] was a venue to do it in. It was some kind of a structure to talk about problems you were having. . . . And often times we'd bring things that we'd done and share them, or discuss problems we'd had through-out the day.

Problems of the day or ideas that worked well were shared frequently. This assisted in clarifying the transition in the school. The sharing of ideas and projects also took place outside the school. Judy remembered one illustration of this in 1986 when a group of the teachers went to the IRA conference in Vancouver. The group then was able to share their new knowledge and together apply it in the classroom. Becky also remembered attending a number of conferences with the group, "I think that provides lots of opportunity to talk together after the conferences."

Sharon agreed that the professional sharing was invaluable. She and a colleague across the hall were very close and she remembered that, "we've planned units, shared intern teachers we've had for a whole year, shared student teachers. We've shared and worked together a lot. . . . But we found we worked really well together." Sharon would constantly be involved with her during and after school as they'd meet and exchange ideas and problems encountered. Becky also had an impact on Sharon: "a really good influence because she had some different ideas, so we'd listen to her." In fact, Sharon recalled some district language arts groups that would get together to meet and share ideas, and she said the staff at Green Isle would "overwhelm" everyone because they'd all show up. The entire staff just seemed to connect and the enthusiasm strengthened the innovation

and the process itself. For that reason, the sharing proved invaluable to the team at Green Isle.

Closely related to the sharing in the team, peer support was also identified numerous times in the data. Becky said without hesitation that the environment was really supportive.

> I don't think we could have done the kinds of things we did or feel as comfortable doing them. . . . And you wouldn't feel like you're exposing yourself or that you were inferior in any way by opening up. . . . We would just come and sit down and talk about the things we were going through, the changes we were going through. . . . We joke about it now, but a teacher coming down at Christmas time, and she taught grade one, and saying, 'These kids will never learn to read. What will I do?' And so we talked about those kind of things.

This type of collaboration was also remembered by Judy.

> We always chatted at the end of the day, even if it was five minutes or half an hour, and whoever needed the moral support, there was always somebody there. . . . I remember at one point we were all out in the hallway hugging one another. . . . So we were always there to support one another and that helped an awful lot.

This type of support seemed common-place within the school as challenging times were experienced. Sharon exclaimed that the staff had so much "keen-ness" that there was always help from someone.

> That if I went to another school. . . . I'd feel I'd have to do it on my own, and I wouldn't have as much confidence. The atmosphere of the school has helped tremendously to make me feel confident enough and to encourage me--to go ahead and try all those things.

After relating a story about a central office administrator coming in to work in the school on a project, Sharon remembered him saying that "it's certainly a warm school" and "I think it's because it's not just the

warmness of the teachers to the children but it's to each other." Becky summed it up this way: "If you run into questions or problems, it's nice to be able to have somebody right there to say 'Hey, I tried this. What do you think? What could I have done?'"

Support for the team came in another form as well -- professional development to enhance efforts in the transition. One example, discussed above, was the team attending conferences together. Becky emphasized:

> They were absolutely necessary, yes, when you're trying to make those kind of changes because for one thing--to see that yes, there are lots of other people in other school jurisdictions going through the same kinds of things that you are. You needed that type of support. . . . We needed to go out together because we all needed to hear the same message. . . . Teachers need to get out together and not just one representative go out and report back. It just never has the same impact.

Conferences made it possible for each teacher to experience the events first hand, and then the team could collaborate on what they learned. Sharon found a similar story in her past. A team of five or six teachers headed down to a three day conference in Lethbridge. She recalled sharing on the bus trip down, going to sessions together, planning in between sessions and at night, interacting about the various topics they had learned about, and then planning on the trip back. "And then when we got back, of course, we talked with the others. We thought there's nothing but to just go jump into it. So those poor children the first day we were back--we hit them with all these new approaches."

With the team so "connected" it could also have a greater voice in requesting aid from outside the school. "We would sometimes come to a standstill over issues like spelling. So we would need an outside speaker. . .

. We went to our principal again, and that's another way that he supported [us]. We said we needed more input on that particular area. So he would say, 'Well, who do you need?' and he would have them come out, and we would do an after school session."

Not only would the teachers have speakers come to their school, but with a collective voice they also made arrangements to visit other schools. Becky was impressed with such a venture. "And that was just a wonderful experience to go through there and see the types of things that they were doing. To actually visit classes in progress was really helpful." One other resource used by the team was the beginnings of "action research." The teachers would bring topics, simple to begin with, to the group and if there was not satisfactory information about the topic, some of the participants would research it and report back to the others. The team concept had a definite impact on making the most of available professional resources to facilitate change.

The team approach was loose and informal, but effective. Some teachers had families and others were busy doing other things, so formal meetings were not appropriate. The teachers dropped into a meeting when they could, and they shared when they thought they could help. Judy remarked that, "Even today, we don't have structured grade meetings together, simply because there isn't time. And after school, everybody's got this or that on and it's hard to bring people together and find a date that's perfect, so you meet when you best can." This informal atmosphere seemed quite conducive to the needs of the teachers involved in the change process. The team approach to helping each other was vital to Sharon,

Becky and Ruby. It is important to note as well that the team included any staff member who wished to take part. This included at times the vice-principal/librarian and the principal. Sharing ideas, support for each other and mutual professional development played a key role in implementation at Green Isle School. As stated earlier, peer interactions were mentioned by all teachers and were not unique to Green Isle, but the atmosphere, intensity of interaction, and involvement of the whole staff was. It's refreshing that Judy claimed, "We've had quite a few changes with three or four new teachers on staff and yet the same feeling is there. So it just seems they're just part of the team as well."

Situational collegial influences.

That was really important to me because it meant that I had someone who was involved in the same process as I was, having the same struggles that I was having. (Marilyn)

Both Parkhill and Ridgewood teachers recognized the importance of peers in their implementation. Although the interactions were not as unified as Green Isle, they cannot be said to be any less important. Their contexts seemed more situational, and perhaps the only difference from the Green Isle experience is they were more varied and less focused on this particular innovation at any particular time. Once more, the data presentation focuses on two influences: sharing and support.

Support for each other during times when change is uncertain was certainly recognized in Ridgewood. Both Marilyn and Maryann saw the influence that it had. Marilyn explained the situation she shared there with another teacher: "We certainly cried on each other's shoulders a lot, and

struggled through a lot of things together, and it was really nice to have somebody to be a sounding board. I think we both felt that way." This mutual peer support was remembered by Maryann as well. She noted that her peers both inside and outside the school would often discuss things and she claimed "a lot of that comes from the fact that we work with each other and are supportive of each other." Being able to dialogue about problems and issues was vital for Maryann: "I really feel in teaching, more than anywhere else, you have to do that." Terms like "positive encouragement" and "positive feedback" came to mind when asked about the support: "I mean you'll stay away from people who are going to judge you, won't you? . . . There's a big difference between positive criticism and judgement." The climate in Ridgewood then, as summarized by Maryann, seemed to be conducive to teachers helping teachers in encouraging ways and to take risks just like they are trying to teach the children to do.

With the encouragement and support from others, the stage appears to be set for sharing and idea exchange. Jenny identified this influence by other teachers as quite important. Although she doesn't believe it would have affected her decision to change her program, she does feel it certainly had an impact. Jenny believes working with others at the same grade level is a key: "I think that's where we pass on information within our school and it very often tends to be at grade level. . . . but most of the nitty-gritty, 'this is what works for me' is more beneficial when it's someone teaching at your own level." Jenny and Sandra spend a lot of time sharing ideas and helping each other. They are comfortable asking each other for advice and discussing methods and materials they've tried.

Sandra had a slightly different collegial sharing experiences that proved to be influential. She was a substitute teacher after taking an extended leave to raise her family, and for two years the observations and interactions she had with many teachers in different schools had an impact. As well, as mentioned earlier, she also was in contact with a former colleague in Saskatchewan who was influential in bringing her up to date on many Whole Language philosophies and practices. After recalling that she has a network of other grade one teachers to share with, she stated: "So basically, for me, I guess, colleagues has [sic] been the biggest thing, hasn't it?"

As Marilyn recognized the influence that others had on her level of comfort and support, she also recognized the value of sharing. "It really helped me to think things through more carefully and to be able to justify them and to be able to talk about what I was doing and why I was doing them." Thinking things through and justifying decisions you'd make are feelings that Maryann shared. She felt that without that positive criticism she would fear turning into a rigid teacher: "Well, there's teachers, you've seen them, that have not changed from the day they walked into the classroom." And Maryann continued with her support for sharing by comparing it to a situation she was in previously where the school "was completely competitive and no one shared anything. It was awful. I lasted there one year. I couldn't wait to get out. . . . and it's not good for the kids. You have to share."

The sharing concept went even further for Marilyn who cherished the experience she was fortunate enough to have had with two teacher

mentors. To Marilyn they did more for her than provide a sounding board.

> I think it wasn't so much the actual things they did, although that was part of it. It was their attitude about what learning was and what a teacher was and I think it's from them that I developed the attitude and perspective that a teacher is a facilitator. . . . I think it was . . . a passion for teaching that I got from those two ladies in particular. . . . It's their pure love for teaching.

The two mentors were from the same grade level as Marilyn and there was a lot of idea exchange and team teaching happening. Like the teachers at Green Isle they would plan and meet quite informally for the most part, but did schedule specific meetings for more formal plans. But for Marilyn these two were special in the lasting effects they had on her.

Marilyn encountered many more situations where teachers played an influential role in her process of change. If fact, she went so far as to claim that

> I think that all the really important things I learned about teaching I learned from other teachers. I didn't learn from books. . . . The things I'm thinking about are the kinds of things you can only learn if you're in a certain kind of relationship with somebody. . . . The kind of powerful things I'm talking about come from really beginning to know that other person as a teacher.

Marilyn used words like "instinct", "commitment", "passion", "master-teacher", and "integrity" when describing her mentors. They were visible to her every day and she saw them "dealing with their own struggles and the realities of the classroom." She compared them to presenters at workshops or conferences by saying that valuable insights are gained, but the impact of speakers is "more transitory, it's not as long lasting, doesn't

have as much substance." Fellow teachers and mentors proved to be Marilyn's key to learning about what's important in teaching.

Sandra and Jenny recognized the value of fellow teachers as well. They admitted they had their own sharing experiences in and around their school, but also talked of sharing presently occurring. The sharing is organized by two consultants at their district office and involves teachers of grade one and two. Sandra revealed that these were not happening during her implementation phase, but she admitted, "that stuff should have been done years ago. . . . I like coming away with all the different ideas. . . . sharing with other colleagues and sharing of ideas. I think that's really important. . . . It saved me probably three years of work trying to accumulate stuff." Jenny agreed it "certainly makes things easier. . . . It's been fabulous. . . . It's a great way to communicate with other grade one teachers. I think that's far more useful."

Summary of collegial influence. The teachers all recognized the importance of fellow teachers in both the capacities of sharing and support. Each teacher reported the significant role played by peers and how this contributed to their effective implementation of Whole Language. The contexts of the interactions varied from (1) those involved in a "team" setting, (2) those sharing with a partner, (3) those that related with others out of the school, and (4) those who had mentors to work with. Regardless of the situational contexts, the influence contributed substantially to their professional development as teachers.

Professional Development

During the implementation of Whole Language each teacher described the process of gaining new knowledge, skills and attitudes. The development of their teaching methodologies and understandings appeared to have been a substantial determinant of successful implementation. In the previous category the impact of interactions with other teachers on growth in knowledge, skills and attitudes was discussed. Due to the rich data it was treated as a separate category. This category discusses the professional development processes that teachers followed and how these contributed to their growth. Professional development experiences include conferences/workshops, class visitations and the use of other professional resources.

Conferences and workshops.

> *Yes, I guess I hope I'd be where I am today, but I doubt if I would have been had I depended on the amount of professional development that's in the school division because they just don't have the amount of time or money.* (Judy)

By far the most common form of teacher development, excluding interactions with other teachers, was participation in conferences and workshops. Each teacher identified with them at one time or another--some suggesting they were absolutely necessary and others suggesting they were helpful, but had minimum impact.

The staff at Green Isle School were all involved in several conferences through-out their campaign to embrace the Whole Language

philosophy and practice, and they all assigned prime importance to the role they played. Judy said,

> I have, over the past five years or so, gone to conferences between Edmonton, Calgary, [and] Vancouver, so that I have an opportunity to listen to every major speaker that's been involved the the Whole Language movement. . . . We kind of joke around here because. . . [I'm] kind of the workshop queen and conference queen, but I love it. It really keeps me going. It goes back to our community school philosophy of 'everyone a teacher, everyone a learner.'

The attending of conferences impacted on Becky as well. She recollected going to several conferences with the group from the school and agreed that these were instrumental in the change process. "Sometimes I think, 'Am I doing the right thing?' And all you need to do is go to a conference . . . to get that reassurance that, yes, I am on the right track." Judy gave one example of how the speakers at these functions influenced her beliefs and attitudes.

> I went to a workshop and Frank Smith was talking and someone said, 'How do you feel Whole Language is coming along?' and he said, 'It's going to die.' 'What do you mean it's going to die?' And he said, 'As soon as they put Whole Language into reader form with a teacher guide, it's going to die.' And because I'm a firm believer in the philosophy and I now understand what he's saying, and I see teachers using the anthologies and the teacher guides put out by all the different companies and they're using it like a basal and they're using it in a very structured way. So that scares me.

Listening to the experts is a motivator and an important source of knowledge for Judy. Sharon explained that she "got a lot of confidence going to other courses [conferences]." It really helped her with many unanswered questions because reading the proponents' books just didn't do it all for her. In fact, she described them as "my prime way of getting

other information other than through the teachers that were around. . . . You always felt you'd had a good time if you'd gone and came home with one idea. Sometimes it was just a general feeling."

Becky suggested that this learning was exponential when collaboration with teachers from your staff who also attended the conferences was possible. It provided the opportunity to talk together about what was learned in the sessions. She emphasized that "teachers need to get out together, and not just one representative go out and report back. It just never has the same impact." So to provide a time to be together was part of the usefulness of this resource. Judy agreed and noted that it was through this medium that teachers in the school division actually got to know one another and become more supportive of one another by sharing ideas and common roadblocks. "It was another way to connect--it was another way to connect as a school." Sharon felt the same affects and noted that when the group went to Lethbridge for three days that a lot of "blanks" were filled in that as a staff they were unsure of. Further, she went so far as to say that it was a "real turning point." It gave them all a chance to jump on the "bandwagon" together.

The Green Isle staff placed great emphasis on the positive effects of conferences. They were not alone in this regard. At Ridgewood Marilyn believed that they played a role as well. She, like the staff at Green Isle, made no distinctions between where they were or who put them on, but said that it really just depended on the presenter. Their main function, however, was again to provide input for needs the teacher had. When a particular need emerged Marilyn would search out a session to assist her.

In some cases the impact was greater than others as she described when she went to an Early Childhood Conference: "Some people can really impact you. . . . really said something that's really jumped out at me or had an impact on me or they've introduced a strategy where I've said, 'Boy I can really use that in my classes.'" Many times Marilyn felt that the speakers would start her on a certain road to thinking or focus her and lead her in a certain direction. They weren't crucial but they were helpful. Maryann had similar views and added that because of her personality and her curiosity for new things that conferences were necessary so that she has the option to either accept or reject things. Overall, however, she claimed that "I learned a lot about what they [proponents] meant by it [Whole Language]."

Sandra and Jenny in Parkhill saw value in conferences as well. Sandra remembered "everytime something came up on Whole Language for reading or writing I would try to get to it so I could find out more about it." Like Maryann she attended sessions involving those who were well known proponents and initiators of the philosophy so that they could show how they did things and how things worked. Jenny placed less emphasis on them, but mentioned some writing inservices that the district office put on. Those were helpful in that they fit in well with the Whole Language procedures. She was impressed with the direction they were pointing to with the writing process.

Conferences and workshops provided the teachers with another source of information and a way to connect with the material and each other. The influence was once again quite individual, but generally

effective in providing support and enlightenment for those that sought them out.

Class visitations and professional resources. When conferences and other teachers could not help with some aspects of the change two other resources were used by the teachers. Many teachers made use of professional books that addressed the Whole Language philosophy and others went to visit classrooms where they could witness the program in action.

Judy, Becky and Sharon of Green Isle read a lot of current literature in the field and amassed their own personal libraries. Judy explained that "the conferences kind of opened the door but you had to read some of the books that were published by the speakers to really get into it." Visits to other schools were also found to be very helpful. Becky stated that "that was really helpful to just have the opportunity to sit down and talk to some of the teachers there. To actually visit classes in progress was really helpful."

In Parkhill School Jenny described a similar experience. She was hitting a bit of a plateau in her implementation and asked a district consultant to organize a class visitation for her. "It was so nice to go in and see what she was doing and Donald Graves [a proponent of the writing process] had actually piloted or done one of his writing programs in her room and so I could see that it worked." Jenny made the point that it was worth a "whole pile of inservices" and did for her much of what the "team" did for the staff at Green Isle. It provided her with a clearer vision of where she was going so that she knew whether the time was "worthwhile";

it let her see practical applications of many theoretical ideas; made her feel more assured that "this was the way to go and that I could keep going on it without feeling that it wasn't going to work;" and, finally, gave her more confidence that what she was doing was on the right track. Jenny's impressions of the visit were that it was very effective and that we all should do more of them.

The other teachers all mentioned doing some professional reading as well. They searched out and purchased many resources that assisted in their clarifications of Whole Language. Many described an approach like Sandra's, "Every time I run across an article in a magazine, like a teacher magazine, or whatever, and reading. . . the different books and things, [anything] that I could get my hands on."

These data on other resources are not extensive, nevertheless, these resources seemed to have made lasting impressions on the teachers and assisted in their development of the innovation.

Summary of professional development. The teachers reported those influences that improved their understanding of Whole Language. The experiences and the emphasis were varied, but most touched on each of them as having some effect. Conferences and workshops, class visitations and reading related literature all contributed to successful implementation. Making some of this possible through another kind of support is the influence of the principal which we'll discuss next.

The Principal

In much the same way as was reported for the other categories, the principal's influence was varied, but present in all reports by teachers of

their implementation activities. In not one case was the principal directly involved in the initiation stage, but the support of the principal's office was recognized as important during implementation for different reasons. The teachers did not claim that the principal guided or directed any of the implementing, nor issued any ultimatums or top-down directives. In all cases the local administration adopted, in greater and lesser degrees, a supportive role. Because many teachers were involved in more than one school during their implementations, a school-by-school analysis is not really feasible, except for Green Isle. However, there are some commonalities that emerged from the data that produce two basic distinctions: the principal as proactive change facilitator, and the principal as reactive supporter.

Proactive change facilitator. In Green Isle all three teachers agreed strongly that they have had very supportive and proactive principals during the change process. The influence of these principals had been an important component of the success of the innovation. Becky made note of it in recollecting her arrival at Green Isle School. "It was a totally different feeling. You had the support of your principal and you knew you had that cohesiveness." Judy was equally generous in her remarks. "They've all been very supportive. . . . The support was there and if you want to try a little bit more as you go along, the support system is there." Sharon remembered her principals fondly and believed she'd been quite lucky to have them be supportive and give her the freedom she needed. What was it about the principals that made them so valuable to the teachers?

"I admired the man greatly. He has been a major influence on me as a teacher in the way he handles everything," Judy commented about the first principal she worked with during the transition. "He is sort of that low-key kind of personality, always supports his teachers 100 percent, always open to new ideas and yet he also is like the father-figure that offers advice, always listens, always kept our feet on the ground, but in a very, very low-key way." Becky agreed that he was very low-key and treated the teachers as professionals. "He was always there to listen. . . . If you had a problem everything was confidential. . . . He was very collaborative at our staff meetings. The decision making was always shared." Knowing that his staff were professionals, he also allowed them to take risks and allowed them the freedom to grow professionally. Sharon remembered that he always gave positive comments and was quite visible. She stated that he made every teacher feel that they were really valuable. One way he did this was to organize small retreats for the teachers and deal with teacher-related issues like wellness. He'd summarize conferences and workshops he'd been to and distribute notes on them to the staff. He helped by arranging speakers to come into the school when the staff requested them, arranged visitations to other schools, and sat in on their support group meetings. Becky remembered that he even took extra supervision, extra classes and teaching duties to allow teachers time to collaborate. Judy liked the fact that he never flatly said "no" to something, but would say, "Go ahead, give it a try, and I'd like to come in and see what you're doing once in awhile." This was done out of interest and not in the threatening way that makes teachers think "evaluation." Sharon also recalled his

flexibility: "He didn't come into the room, but he knew what was going on. . . . He'd always say, 'Go with it, and let me know what happens.'" Judy recalled that the staff was not dictated to. "They don't come in with a certain philosophy and the rest of us all have to follow their philosophy." It would seem that his daily relations with the staff and with school issues were constantly handled with the highest degree of respect. "He always thought things through and the way he would speak and take his time and think about some things. I guess that influenced me to also do the same thing, to take stock of what was happening, slow down, check what I was doing, that kind of thing," Judy summarized.

The second principal came on board after the change was in full swing. Judy remembered, however, that he especially didn't step in to try and find out if what they were doing met with his approval. Instead he took the same kind of low-key approach, observing and learning about the school and how it functioned. He allowed the teachers to continue with their existing programs. So there was no immediate takeover. Both administrators were described as accommodating and helpful in the change process. Due to the timing the first principal was more involved in the initiation phase, therefore, he was recognized for all that he did to encourage and support the teachers in endeavors to succeed in their journey.

Marilyn saw her administrators in the same light--as change advocates. She emphasized that they were "key " to the whole process of change:

> I think if you are in a school where the administration doesn't encourage original thinking, but wants everyone to stay on the straight and narrow and do things the way things have always been done, then you're going to have a very hard time. Because you re going to feel that you're fighting against something or coming up against a wall that you can't knock down and eventually you'll give up. So I think that school administrators are very important people, they set the tone for the whole school.

After being asked to describe an administrator that influenced her, Marilyn commented on characteristics that most of her's had. They were interested in what she was doing, in touch with activities in the classroom, always asking questions, giving suggestions and feedback, visible in the classes, working with the teachers, really listening to her needs, not giving teachers unnecessary hassles, and responding in a positive manner. "Teachers are just human beings and I think they need to be praised when they deserve to be praised. . . . Administrators need to be good communicators." This was an important aspect to Marilyn as she believed that "teachers are in such a giving profession. You're giving all day to the students, the parents, interacting with the other staff members, and I think that administrators need to be aware that teachers need to receive support and affirmation. And they need to be told they're doing a good job." Further, Marilyn commented that her administrators were good change leaders. They were willing to take risks by letting the teachers try new things and experiment, provided of course that the teachers back up their proposals with good reasons. So she saw her past administrators as proactive--introducing the teachers to new ideas, while at the same time being responsive to their needs. Clearly the principal was a key to the success of Marilyn's innovation.

Reactive supporter. To the other teachers their administrators were described as the technical supporters. There role was remembered as the resource provider. Jenny recalled that she got support only in as far as the principal provided funding for materials like books. After purchasing the new reading series which had a Whole Language basis to it, she stated that "I assume they assumed that we were following the ideas that it put out." At the same school Sandra reiterated these thoughts that the principals were very good at giving materials to the teachers when they requested them. When asked if the past principal was supportive she responded, "as long as the money was there." At the same time, however, she did insist that he was always there if you needed to go to him for advice or suggestions. The same kind of feelings were described by Maryann at Ridgewood School. She claimed she was "fortunate" to have had principals that let her do what she thought was best, and let her voice her opinion when she didn't agree with something. Yet she noted that one of her principals didn't really support Whole Language specifically, but just gave her the freedom to try it.

Summary of the principal's influence. Clearly the teachers saw their administrators in at least two different ways: the proactive change facilitator and the reactive supporter. The level of influence paralleled each teacher's interpretation of how she saw her principals during the change process. To some the principal was very significant while to others only in an indirect, strictly responsive manner. It seems some principals were involved only when asked to be and some wanted in at the ground floor.

Parent Involvement

If you welcome parents and educate them about what you're doing with their children, they can be such a strong base of support for you. (Marilyn)

Parent support was not something that came automatically with the change to Whole Language programs. The information volunteered on parent support came with little prompting from the interviewer, and it was an aspect of the change that usually came up more than once during the interviews. Parent influence was not interpreted by the teachers as having a high impact on their decisions or the innovation's directions, but appeared to have been a factor that could be positive, neutral or negative. The teachers all seemed to have committed time to making sure that the parents were kept informed so as to assure that they had their support. The teachers respected the parents as stakeholders, even if they exercised an indirect or limited influence.

The Green Isle experience. The parent interaction was described in a fairly detailed manner by the teachers at Green Isle School. Judy noted that "we have a lot of parent support but we earned it. They didn't just give it to us. We put in a lot of evenings." She recognized that parents knew school the way they went to school. Becky remembered that many were concerned, not overly, but "just concerned that we were making some changes, and the way that we were teaching." They'd be worried about spelling, "Is spelling taught anymore?" And Judy would respond by saying, "Certainly, I'm teaching spelling. I teach it in a different way but I certainly teach it." The teachers described how they

had to work at parent support for the change occurring in the school. Sharon recalled the great amount of explaining during innovations like portfolios and integration of subjects. Much of this would be done at teacher/parent conferences. The preparation for such times forced her to become more enlightened on the theory so that she could internalize it and present it to the parents.

Becky talked about inviting the parents to the school "to tell them about the kinds of things we wanted to do and the kinds of changes we were trying to make. To explain to them why we were doing it, our philosophies and beliefs about the way that kids learned."

Judy added that this was important because the parents needed reassurance. "I call the parents in, and it's not just a 'Hi, how are you?' I go through and present my whole program to them and the turnout's pretty good." It didn't end with a one-shot meeting. Judy described how the effort to communicate with parents continued throughout the year. During evaluation and report card time, "Celebration for Learning," the parents arrived with their children so that the teachers could model the progress for the parent. Parents can see how the teacher and child interact, how things are explained and worked through. This took considerable time but the teachers felt that parents needed educating along with the rest of the school. They had to be brought "on board" for the journey. Judy stressed that this process "evolved" to gain the respect that the school has today.

Support for the school's Whole Language approach grew with the implementation of the change. Becky, Judy and Sharon mentioned this important element numerous times, and in various contexts. Just to

emphasize and prove the impact that the teachers' efforts had on educating the parents Becky described one telling incident. The school changed the report card about three times in three consecutive years during the implementation stages because of the trial and error phenomenon characteristic of many innovations. "We'd try something and we wouldn't be quite happy with it and we'd try something else and wouldn't be quite happy with it. The parents supported us. Like in a lot of communities they would have just said, 'Whoa! Do you guys know what you're doing here because you're changing every year?' And rightfully so because it did look like we were a little bit disorganized with our assessment tool, and we were." But the parents had a lot of trust in the teachers on staff. As well, Sharon points out that the parents learned to accept and be forgiving when a teacher floundered a bit during the implementation of a new program. So that now Judy can happily state that the parents are "very much behind us on the form of evaluation we use, so it's not a frustration from their part." They support the program, are very thankful at the end of the year and take time to thank her. The positive support pays off by assisting the teachers in the change process, and by getting the parents involved in the change.

"There's always parents helping, if not directly in the classroom, they're either taking groups of children doing different things, [or] they're always coordinating and organizing," Judy recollected. This open-door policy actively involved the community in concrete ways. Sharon saw a difference in how often parents dropped in remembering that it was not always this way. Again, Ruby stressed that this was a growing experience,

"I've grown into how to use volunteers. . . . Rather than just have them come in to staple or organize, I use their expertise. It's just amazing how many experts are in a community." The degree to which parents were effectively utilized in the school was captured by Ruby's statement: "I think sometimes the children don't always even see the difference between the parents as teachers and the teachers as teachers." The open-door community school atmosphere would appear to be very appropriate for the Whole Language teacher where parents are educated, supportive and subsequently involved in their child's education.

Parkhill and Ridgewood parent interaction. The other teachers strongly believed in communication with parents as well. Marilyn reported that she had always worked very closely with her parents, and has had very active volunteer programs. She believes that by educating them and keeping them involved that you are really boosting your own public relations and building yourself a strong base of support. Maryann also believes in keeping parents informed by holding meetings at the start of the year to explain what their programs are like and how they interpret Whole Language. She noted that she never had a problem with a disgruntled parent coming in. Jenny followed suit by having an open house each year to talk about the upcoming year. She kept an active volunteer program going by involving parents in a variety of ways. The door was always open on a drop-in basis and for those that would like to attend on a regular basis. She agreed with Marilyn that it can boost your program's image because "the parents come in and they see things happening. . . and they talk about what they see in the classroom. So word travels." Finally,

Marilyn also indicated that with a strong parent support base there is more carry over to the home and they end up affirming what you're trying to get across in the classroom. Many of the teachers seemed to find the response from the parents as important in as far as it does affirm their actions and that their praise was gratifying.

Through an analysis of the thick description that emerged from the data at Green Isle, and elsewhere, it became fairly clear that the Green Isle staff and the other teachers advocated much the same practices: involving parents in their classrooms, having open-door policies, educating them in new innovations, and using them to affirm their own beliefs. Again, due to Green Isle's status as a community school, this aspect was perhaps recognized and emphasized more.

Community School Influence

A crucial influence on the Green Isle teachers and their change experience originated with the community school concept that Green Isle adopted in 1985. Although only this one school had formal community school designation, the data were powerful enough to deserve our full attention. There were two clear impacts that were described by the teachers: its relation to Whole Language and the increased parent involvement.

The philosophy of the community school appeared to overlap regularly with that of the teachers in their move towards Whole Language teaching. According to Judy, the "legwork" involved in becoming a community school had "quite a big influence on me because a lot of the philosophy of the community school fits so well with the philosophy I have

in the classroom." This powerful belief strongly supported by Judy and the community is "everyone a learner - everyone a teacher." The students in the class were hosting a conference in the school for senior citizens to teach them about computers and their use. The teacher was a facilitator in this process just as in the Whole Language tradition. "It's not [the] teacher being in direct control of the classroom always dictating -- that there's a wider world out there," Judy stressed. Not only is the teacher a facilitator, but also a student. "I think to be a good teacher, you have to be a competent learner." In reflection she is convinced, "maybe even as I talk to you I'm thinking myself that the community school did connect very well in a lot of ways."

And what if it were not a community school? "I think maybe it gave me the support. I would hope, but I'll never know, if I'd been in a school that wasn't a community school, that I would have changed." In fact, many teachers had came and gone in the school, but they seemed "uncomfortable" with the community school concept, and they also "were not believers" in the Whole Language philosophy. The two appeared to have a direct impact on each other. Without a doubt Judy believed that the major influence upon her in her years at Green Isle had been the many experiences in the community school atmosphere.

Becky agreed that "the two philosophies kind of melted nicely together." It was in that spirit that such a positive environment with the parents was created. "We were always having our community coming to our school and we would have as many parents in the staff-room as we would teachers." Judy added that the parents and other community

members were used as experts for various areas of study such as different types of "home" structures (log homes, stone homes and so on). "The community is so connected to the school . . . they really go overboard." And this "open door" policy often contrasted with the traditional teacher "that is totally in control in the classroom in the sense that you do it your way and everybody, including the kids, follow your way, and the door is shut, and you just open it to let the kids out for recess." The door was not only open for parents, but also to the division's central office. Becky suggested that this practice was more due to the community school's spirit than anything else "to show them some of the things that you'd done . . . [and] sharing with them the kinds of things we were doing."

The community/school relationship was perceived by the teachers as being important to the Whole Language change process. With respect to both the parent's and the children's involvement in the classroom, the nature of the two innovations would appear to have boosted and encouraged each other. The community school innovation, therefore, enriched the implementation of Whole Language. The role of central office, on the other hand, seemed to be limited.

Central Office's Influence

The role of central office in the teachers' innovation was almost non-existent. There were two supportive roles that were briefly mentioned. The first was the financial aid that they would receive for attending some conferences, or for funding for ordering materials. Second, some of the consultants that were hired by central office had some influence. It should be mentioned that with the exception of one or two consultants, this

influence probably would not have emerged at all had one of the guiding questions of the interview not probed about it. This void in the central office influence left only a skeleton of an impression.

Resources for books, materials and professional development sometimes came from central office. Becky noted that one person in their central office would try to do everything he could for them at Green Isle. Jenny claimed that before her change there was little impact from District Office, but that during her later and more recent implementations they were "really helpful and supportive with materials we've wanted." The support for resources at Green Isle was a consequence of a pilot study done with the new Impressions reading series that was supposed to parallel the Whole Language movement. During that year central office had a curriculum director who was very supportive of what the teachers were doing. If some extra funding for conferences or materials was needed he would try to oblige. However, this position did not last long and he was not a role player in the change after this time.

The role of certain consultants had a more lasting impression with some of the teachers. Perhaps their role is limited in quantity only because as Marilyn noted most school jurisdictions were losing central office staff due to cut backs. However, Marilyn remembered the ones she encountered early on as being quite important. "I can remember a couple that had very strong influences on me and were very affirming--that I would call up and say, 'Could you come in this morning and observe my classroom I'm having problems with...whatever?'. . . And they were happy to do that." There was one that Maryann remembered as well that seemed to be an

early proponent of the Whole Language philosophy. Her and another lady would give a "push in a very supportive way. And very much a way I liked about them was, 'Just try some of it.'--which was the way it should have been done all the way around. Just try it. Maybe you'll like it, and you'll keep on trying." As well, Maryann recalled that one would come in to the school and be quite encouraging: "I mean how many warm fuzzies do we ever get as teachers?" So it was important for her own affirmation.

Sandra and Jenny remembered a Donald Graves writing workshop inservice that was organized by their district office. It didn't really have a big impact on their implementation of Whole Language, but it was seen as helpful. Sandra commented on their role: "It was more of a service to people--children that were having difficulty--and then they would come over. That was how I saw their job until then."

Judy mused over the district's influence suggesting that the change "was very much left up to the individual teacher and their own professional development," and that "there was some release time, but not an awful lot." Although central office did not get involved in the change at Green Isle School, Judy noted that they didn't inhibit them either. After her assignment in Green Isle School, Becky temporarily held a position of curriculum coordinator at central office and being responsible for assisting teachers in their change she noted: "They don't get the support from central office that they might. We've asked for more time to do our conferencing. Not even so much more time, as making the time a little more flexible." So the support from central office during the change at Green Isle School and the others can be described as limited. Marilyn and

Maryann were the only ones to have recalled any lasting impact and that was due to consultants at District Office. Again their role should not be underestimated because of the limited numbers involved with this type of interaction. Overall, however, Central Office staffs had very little to do with most implementations made by teachers.

Significant Others

Some of the teachers had anecdotes which included people that did not fall neatly into any one category. Since no two experiences in the change process can be identical, we can expect some real differences as has been demonstrated already. The following significant others played influential roles in certain teacher's implementations: vice-principal/librarian, student teachers, and a former colleague.

While the principals in Green Isle School provided the respect and support the teachers required, others in the local school had an influence as well. One that was mentioned was the vice-principal/librarian. The library grew into a priceless resource as the transition to Whole Language occurred. The lady responsible for much of this was the vice-principal, also in charge of library duties. "We had a librarian that was fantastic and supported us, and went out and got lots of literature that we needed. . . It was a fantastic situation," recalled Becky. Judy remarked, "The vice-principal had control of the library and she started changing the library. That brought us more and more into the library being the focal point of the school and the classroom being more like the hubs connected. . . . There is a flow and a connection to the library. Of course that just got us into literature. It just opened the door." Sharon made similar reference to her

scheduling flexibility. The three described the librarian as very flexible, helpful, encouraging and very knowledgeable. She was quite "connected" with the movements in England and aware of the Whole Language methodology. She would take the students into the library anytime through the day, and was very flexible with her time. She would adjust to the teachers' needs and assist them with students that needed extra help with their reading and with those who required more of a challenge. One of Becky's students who was younger than most of the other children in kindergarten had some problems with school. "But he would go down to the library everyday and I know he didn't miss a day. And he knew his way down to the library, and the librarian would take him and read a book to him and send him back to class everyday with a new book. So that was kind of his way into the school, and what a wonderful way into the school." From helping individual students to providing new resources and encouraging the teachers, this vice-principal became quite a force in the school's make-over, and consequently in the teachers' changes.

Sandra made special mention of a former colleague in Saskatchewan who affected her implementation. This was described earlier, but in essence she was very helpful in providing Sandra with needed literature on the current trends in Whole Language. As well, she commented that "anytime I had kind of a question or whatever, they [teachers in Saskatchewan] seemed to have been all through this and they seemed to have gotten inserviced on it. So she would know what I was talking about and say well, this is how that works." So the help from a friend created some support and knowledge for Sandra.

The final significant other proved to be helpful to Maryann. She found that having student teachers kept her ideas fresh. "What I love about student teachers is they come out with all these great ideas. . . and it gives me ideas, and maybe sometimes I may look at their ideas and go 'uh-uh'; it works though." As a result of her student teacher's timely ideas, Maryann believed she stayed more on top of changes.

The emphasis here is once more not on quantity as much as on recognizing that each teacher's implementation process is very subjective and that the influence of these significant others needs to be further explored. The common thread running through the vice-principal, the former colleague and the student teachers is that they all supported and assisted another teacher's implementation. Perhaps that kind of support is a force to be more aware of.

Technical Aspects

During the interview teachers were asked to respond to three technical aspects of their implementation: barriers or roadblocks, the element of time, and availability of resources. The data would seem to suggest that these were not very significant forces during the implementation phase. However, there were some responses that may be useful to an understanding of the process.

Barriers and roadblocks.

> *That's where a lot of the growth occurs. That's when you really grow as a professional when you really struggle. That's life in general.* (Marilyn)

When responding to the questions on barriers during implementation, teachers often had difficulty knowing what to address. Emerging from data were two general responses: thoughts on minor problems, and that solving problems was a part of the process.

Thoughts on minor problems were varied with generally only one or two commenting on the same topic. The term "minor" seems to capture the meaning that most attached to them. Those that were described include frustration of not solving some children's problems, lack of books, misconceptions about Whole Language, and the frustration of restructuring. Sharon's thoughts on barriers led her to identify with those students who just didn't seem to make a lot of improvement in either their behavior or academics. She speaks of the frustration of big class sizes and that it was always those last five that seemed to have problems. Both Becky and Sandra commented on the importance of resources. Becky recalled that her school didn't have a lot of student literature, but that was overcome quickly. Having a lack of professional resources was what concerned Sandra. She believed there could have been more on Whole Language in their professional library in the school. That might have saved Maryann some worries too, as she described her barrier as "misconceptions" about Whole Language which made her somewhat fearful and hesitant. She described the different rumors milling about on Whole Language and the lack of knowing if the new practices would benefit the students. Judy, Becky and Sandra all spoke of issues involving restructuring and the frustration of "trying to fit a square peg in a round hole." Judy discussed some of the actions by government as being

disheartening at times as they waffle between more traditional stances and what she sees as more progressive ones. As well, the mindset of some in the community or media that keep misrepresenting Whole Language--perceiving it as anti-grammar and anti-spelling. Becky also saw the need for restructuring the "logistical" kinds of things such as where to place students who have special needs and how that may effect the resource teacher. "So, again, it means some restructuring, it means looking at some things differently, it means changing mind-sets, all of those kinds of things." Sandra pointed to evaluation as being hard because "we're using a traditional system of evaluating on a program that isn't supposed to be evaluated that way. But we do it anyway to cover our behind ends. . . . Teachers are frightened. I mean you're accountable." Redefining and reorganizing would seem, then, to be in order during implementation. As far as actually identifying barriers teachers described restructuring, lack of resources and misconceptions of Whole Language as things that were somewhat problematic.

Even though teachers would identify some minor problems, they would quickly suggest that even though these may have been struggles, they were really not barriers in that they were all just part of the change process, and simply did not impede their journey. Judy commented that the frustrations with some of the older beliefs did not impede her--she explains: "I had enough knowledge and background behind me that I felt confident in my abilities." Maryann recalled that her fears of the many misconceptions that she was hearing did not stop her from certain choices, but only made her take it a little easier, and really do some research into

things. Even though Sandra saw a lack of professional resources as somewhat problematic, she still insisted, "I don't think I had any roadblocks." Sharon even claimed that if she had any barriers they were probably doubting herself at certain times. Thinking of some of her struggles Jenny reported, "There were certain things that I tried that didn't work very well, and I would have to re-think the way to do them." But she admitted she had no real barriers.

So how do the teachers view these times when things just didn't work well? Marilyn explained:

> I know I had some real struggles and concrete issues when I was involved in all of this. But I don't see it as impeding me. I just worked through those issues and those struggles, whatever they happened to be. . . . That's where a lot of the growth occurs. That's when you really grow as a professional when you really struggle. That's life in general.

Becky expressed a similar view in her description of barriers and explained what the implementation stage meant to her:

> Yes, and I think you have to go through that process. I don't think that anyone can just take theory and say, 'O.K. I'm ready to implement.' I mean we can't spend all that time on just the theory stage. I think that's the nature of the change process. We have to take a little bit, try it, and we go back and look, and it's that cyclical kind of thing.

This cyclical type of process is what Jenny described as well: "The first time you do it, sometimes it's successful and sometimes it's a disaster and you have to rethink it, so I don't see those kinds of things as blockages."

Teachers did describe these struggles, problems, and tough times as hard work and maybe in some cases as barriers, but afterward would generally maintain that they did not actually block their progress; indeed,

by going through a learning process as they solved these problems, they became that much stronger.

Time.

Teaching can be as much time as you want to give it. (Sharon)

After considering the influence that time had on implementation, teachers recognized its importance, but did not view its restrictions negatively. Each teacher had her own interpretations of what it meant for her.

Many teachers would agree with Sandra that time cuts into your family life, that you're always taking work home and continually manafacturing things for the classroom. In that regard time exerts an influence that we all must contend with. Maryann agreed that during her innovative process she spent a lot of time on teaching, creating materials and the like, but also cautions that "if we aren't involved in other activities and things we really do become so zeroed in on it that we're not as good a teacher." Her advice then would be to control your time so that teaching is not your whole life. Jenny would concur that there's never enough time. However she maintained, "I like change, but I like to do it when I'm in control of it, when I can do as much of it as I feel I have time for. . . . I didn't feel it took a tremendous time commitment--I simply did what I had time for." Sharon found that by shifting the emphasis on how she spent her time that she controlled it,--"so you put the same amount of time [in], but in different places." This was the same feeling Becky had about her time commitments: "My time was involved in different things. It seemed to be more intense in class. You know, it wasn't your traditional teach a lesson,

guided practice type of thing--take it up." Sharon did admit, however, time was always a problem because it just put restrictions on what you could do. Marilyn knew that in her changes she'd often put in more hours on material making and hard work than she should have, but explained that time commitment is natural at different times in your career. There were times she resented that time commitment, but said that with experience she's more aware of it, and makes choices to control the time spent on school. When thinking of time, Judy had a different perspective. She saw it as sometimes a little frustrating because impressions of Whole Language held by government and the community take a while to change. However, she viewed that time as necessary for reflecting on her innovations and further developing her understanding of those changes.

Most teachers then were aware of time as important and often in short supply, but learning to control it and adapt with it was important too. For most teachers this was the influence that "time" had on implementation. As Sharon said, "teaching can be as much time as you want to give it."

Resources.

To what extent were resources an influence on implementation? Most teachers recognized two roles that resources had: professional resource support for the teachers and quality literature for the students.

Resources that could add meaning and clarity to the Whole Language philosophy were mentioned by all of the teachers. Some of their perceptions were described earlier in the professional development category. The message seemed to be that they all used resources and thought they were important. Many identified authors that were strong

activists for Whole Language development like Frank Smith, Donald Graves, Jane Felling, and the McCrackens. So in as much as the professional resources were used, they did have an impact to a greater or lesser degree on each teacher. The resources tended to keep teachers informed about the why's and how-to's when there were specific problems that each had to contend with; and, also served to confirm what they were trying in their classrooms.

Quality literature was a determinant as well, and seemed to be acknowledged more than teacher resources. Maryann described the importance she attached to them by saying that without them the Whole Language movement would not have succeeded. She also recognized that when she started teaching all she had was a reader: "You were lucky if you had two sets of readers. . . . We did not have the materials. . . . To me if Whole Language is going to be a worthwhile project, you've got to have lots and lots and lots of books." Marilyn believed that these resources were very important as well, but agreed with Maryann that it wasn't always that way. She recognized the resource factors that assisted with her changes: "I began to get more support from the kinds of resources that became available and the kinds of things that were being encouraged in the schools as the year progressed. . . . I think teachers feel more confident to supplement those resources with their own ideas, with other resources."

The teachers at Green Isle concured that having many and varied resources was important. All make mention of the good quality literature that was needed. Becky was instrumental in getting homeroom literature libraries started. Sharon noted she was always buying books when a good

one came up. And Judy acknowledged the "hands-on" importance of books for the students. Sandra believed that the literature based resources were imperative, and exclaimed that she purchased several each year for her classroom. Both Sandra and Jenny made a lot of use of high-interest "Big Books" and "Little Books" to assist in their programs. Jenny commented on their importance: "The really good readers could read anything but the ones that were kind of stumbling along didn't have the confidence to try anything else. . . . Whereas now, even right from the minute kids come into your classroom, they can find books in there that they can simply read." Having a variety of literature that was of high interest and at different levels proved to be an important resource that most teachers felt was required during their implementation.

Resources in the forms of teacher professional literature and high quality student literature were influential for teachers' implementation of Whole Language. The data that emerged supports the contention that professional resources kept teachers informed and confident about their practices, and the children's literature was almost a given for high quality reading and writing programs.

Summary of Implementation and Continuation

The teachers described eight general themes that influenced their implementation and continuation of Whole Language: collegial relations, professional development, significant others, the principal, the community school, parents, central office, and technical aspects including time, resources, and barriers to the change. Without a doubt, the interactions between these themes are complex and not identical for each teacher. This

must be accounted for in the final analysis. Yet, although many influences had very subjective meanings, it can still be argued that the themes themselves were in some ways important to how the change process occurred for all teachers. The themes were described several times and by most of the teachers suggesting that they do have meaning and did collectively affect their implementation of the Whole Language programs.

Outcomes

The final phase of the change process, as described by Fullan (1991), is the outcome. In other words, what are the results of the implementation and continuation? Were the objectives attained and were goals achieved? Has learning improved? This particular innovation was not a planned change with rigid objectives set forth and timelines to meet. As described earlier, the teachers simply wanted an improved learning environment for their students that "fit" better with their needs and made sense to themselves. Emerging from the data were three basic types of outcomes relating to school improvement: the perceptions of the students, the perceptions of the teachers, and the perceptions of the program. Further to the concrete, or tangible outcomes, there were also outcomes related to the change process itself. The teachers having gone through a change process passed on their advice to would-be change facilitators and participants.

The Perceptions of the Students

"Students' needs" was one of the great motivators for initiating the movement to Whole Language. When asked to describe their programs,

teachers often referred to what role the students presently played in the classroom, and their enjoyment in school.

So how are students now perceived in the classroom? "They need to be involved in trying things out, in being allowed to have a trial and error approach, very active learning--learning by doing," Marilyn exclaimed. She goes on to describe her students as experimenters that only become good at something by doing it. Becky concured by describing the ownership role students took with respect to their learning in reading workshop and writing workshop. They were more independent and were allowed to make decisions on their own. As students were more involved in free choice, their backgrounds and experiences were also valued. Judy believed that "when children are having a hard time sitting down and paying attention that the program is probably inappropriate for them." Therefore, the program seems to be more tailor made to the students and their needs. Jenny agreed describing how she now seeks out the children's background knowledge and uses that when learning stories. In this way, "everybody isn't in their own little slot. They learn to appreciate each other's ideas and they learn to help each other and give help and take help without being threatened by it." Students helping students is a part of Sandra's program as well. The students are respected as teachers in their own right. Judy is very flexible now since she doesn't quite know what her program will be until she gets her kids and discovers their interests. Sharon strongly believed in "keying" in on the students and their interests. If they are into "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" then that's got to be worked into their learning. Marilyn spoke of teaching "toward what the

need is." Becky supported this as well, explaining that she tried to "accommodate the needs of students better." As Maryann summarized for us, "Now learning is much more a total involvement of the person."

As the students are increasingly gaining ownership of their learning, it would seem their learning is becoming more enjoyable. After describing the process of children learning by doing, Marilyn explained that "the child ends up feeling that he's really accomplished something, that he's a competent successful individual." Sandra also saw her students increase their sense of achievement and added that the Whole Language program seemed to "go along better with giving the kids a safe environment to learn in because it's a risky business for most of them." After describing a reading strategy Sandra emphasized that confidence is increased and kids are set-up so they don't "flunk-out". Maryann saw the reading strategy increase their enjoyment because they were able to read right away. She saw "tremendous growth" in her kids. Kids having fun at school was one of Sharon's greatest concerns: "My idea has been to have the kids love school. Whether it's reading, science or gym I want them to say,"That's good fun. I really want to be here tomorrow!"

This focus on students, what they have to offer and the importance of making learning fun, appeared to be a big part of the outcomes of the Whole Language approach. How did the teachers perceive their roles in this type of situation?

Perceptions of the Role of the Teacher

To be an effective teacher in the Whole Language program the teachers believed you needed to be more of a facilitator. Judy tried to be

less teacher-directed in her class by staying tuned in to the children's interests. She contends that "everyone a learner - everyone a teacher" is the motto in her class and the whole school. In her class, Marilyn holds much the same concept: "I think most of us see ourselves learning right along with the kids." Within such a role Marilyn sees herself as much less of the controller with all the right answers, but now she facilitates creating a supportive learning environment by supplying materials and guiding the learning process through modelling and guided practice. Maryann agreed that her role is more of a facilitator now, claiming that even her classroom management has a new focus: to "feel better about yourself." Sandra claimed she is always on the move helping and guiding the students in their learning; she doesn't even have a desk in her room. Becky noticed the same thing saying that life in the classroom is much more intense now because to meet the students' needs, there's so much going on at once. Being the facilitator to Sharon meant being able to approach learning from various angles, with a room that is less structured so that when "you notice somebody with a problem you can tackle it right then and there when they need it." Being able to use three or five ways to teach something is the trade-mark of a competent teacher for Sharon. You have to be flexible and set your room up in the same fashion. Judy has taken her role one step further looking into action research right in the classroom by "watching the children and letting them tell me as well what's working and what's not working and how to adjust."

The teachers unanimously viewed themselves as facilitators in their classrooms. Rather than the stand-up and lecture roles, they are guides to

learning and creators of learning environments. To achieve this their programs must be flexible and based on the needs of the students depending on where they are at in the learning continuum.

Perceptions of the Whole Language Program

Much of the data that emerged about the teachers' programs did so through discussion about their change process and how they got to where they are today. In that regard it may be somewhat limiting, (since outcomes were not specifically explored) but some general beliefs and practices did become apparent. The teachers keyed in on four broad elements of their programs: integration of subjects, a strong literature base, integrated theme units, and basic process strategies.

Integration of subjects. Many of the teachers spoke of the integration of subjects and skills. Several did not believe that teaching the core subjects separately was the best way to go. Sharon, Becky and Judy usually tried to integrate their language arts into the other core subjects (eg. science and social), and the art, health and music as well. Jenny and Sandra tried to work language in through-out the day and into other subjects. Most teachers accepted that math was tougher to integrate and therefore, usually taught it separately. Marilyn also stressed the integration of the strands or skills of language arts so that the various components were taught together.

Integration of theme units. The means with which many teachers integrated subjects was through theme units where a certain topic was studied for a block of time. Themes were usually set-up by the teachers to accommodate various subjects and, perhaps, to focus on one

subject like a social studies topic or science category. Judy started with smaller themes like "bears" and found that they restricted her too much. To help with the integration of most of her subjects, Judy broadened the themes to topics like "patterns". As Sharon explained, themes, such as a water unit she was doing, also served to heighten the interest of students: "The kids come through that door thinking 'water', so I've got them." Others Sharon mentioned were "Cool Cats" and "foods". Themes then are developed to keep the learning meaningful and interesting for the students and also to facilitate the integrated approach.

Strong literature base. Themes help students identify with certain topics, but the backbone of any good program seemed to be a strong literature base. All teachers spoke of the real necessity for quality literature. Judy referred to this as a "hands-on" approach to reading where students had as much contact with books as possible. Teachers often talked about the need for more books and at different levels with different topics, topics that could satisfy their thirst for learning. Sandra and Jenny talked about their heavy use of "big books" and "little books" and the rich content they found in them. Becky and Judy spoke of the establishment of classroom libraries in Green Isle and the restructured library which made the process of reading more natural and meaningful to the students. Becky pointed out the importance of the books getting home so the reading could be connected from school to home. Judy mentioned comparison studies where various versions of the same piece were studied and discussed to better understand how stories are written. In the discussion on resources above, the importance of literature was made clear. Many teachers felt that

the literature resources in the Whole Language program were extremely important.

Basic process strategies. Now that the teachers have themes and integrated subjects with lots of books, the question can be asked: what do they actually do? Again, it is stressed that this was not the focus of this study, however it was one recurring theme that was talked about during the interviews. There were several strategies and practices that the teachers often described to facilitate the learning process. Probably the most basic of the methodologies used by the teachers in Whole Language was the concept of starting with the "whole" and working towards the specific. Marilyn spoke to the importance of the Whole Language process:

> I kind of look at whole language like I look at kids learning to talk when they are babies. As kids learn to talk when they're quite young and they're babbling and making funny sounds and people respond to them very positively and you'd never think of saying to babies, "No, that's the wrong way to say it. This is how you say it." But they are surrounded by good models, they're hearing people talk. They're encouraged in whatever attempts at talking they make, they get lots of praise for all their efforts, and eventually they just learn through good modelling, encouraged practice, they begin to talk coherently one sound at a time, one word at a time, whatever. And that's how I look at whole language.

Maryann followed this same practice by saying that she started with the students as they walked through the door. She got them "reading" books before she worked on the finer skills in grade one. Jenny believed this helped instill confidence by reading something completely before breaking it down into little bits.

Another strategy that surfaced with four teachers was the research process and the writing process. This would appear to be a focus in their

classes and a means by which the students make learning meaningful to themselves. Marilyn believed, kids must "become good at it by doing it." She firmly believed that "The program of studies is about a body of content, and education is not about a body of content-- it's about teaching kids how to learn." Maryann concurred by stating that kids needed to learn processes with less emphasis on content curriculum. The writing process was a part of most teachers' programs where students wrote in all subjects during the day and edited, talked about, and shared their work together. Journals were used by three teachers to develop and share ideas in their writing. Sharon even involved the parents with the writing by having it sent home so parents could examine and comment on the work. Maryann and Jenny talked of pattern writing where students read a certain selection, perhaps a poem, and then wrote their own version using the same pattern. Maryann had her students believing in themselves as writers: "Last fall when we had an author come in in November, and . . . first thing one kid told the author was, 'We're authors, and we're illustrators, too!'" The point was made many times by most teachers that the phonics and skills were taught as required and in ways that were meaningful to the students. Spelling was the same. It was taught but in different ways.

Another way to achieve teaching processes in learning is through learning centers. Teachers spoke of these often. Students were given choices of various activities at various centers. They were often used to help integrate the other subject areas and to allow for more independent learning where the teacher could work with the student where and when they needed to.

Finally, one of the other common strategies discussed was cooperative learning, and student interaction. Becky claimed they did "lots of writing in pairs, and we did lots of talking. Talk was important." Most had reading strategies that saw students helping students or paired reading processes. Research groups or pairs were established, and many group activities were planned. So overall, teachers made use of several different strategies and practices in their teaching to try to reach as many students as they could. All of the teachers used various strategies in modified ways to suit themselves and their students. But there were certain general methods used that all the teachers applied in some manner.

As any teacher will tell you, there are no two classrooms alike, and this always needs to be accounted for. Even so, when these teachers described various aspects of their Whole Language programs they often spoke of integration of the subject areas, good quality literature, theme units, and process oriented strategies.

Perceptions of the Change Process

> *"Whenever you come in from high and mighty and say WOOF! It's not going to work, even if it's a good thing."* (Maryann)

After discussing with the teachers how they successfully implemented Whole Language into their classrooms, a variation of this question was asked, "If you were principal, what would you do?" After making the journey through the change process they have advice for would-be change facilitators that can be expressed as six basic principles: create a supportive environment, start slow, facilitate internal motivation, recognize where the

teacher is at, use professional development strategies to increase understanding, and be aware of the nature of change.

Most of the teachers recognized that during a change process you need to create an environment conducive to change. There must be an encouraging atmosphere that provides gentle pushes and motivation. As Maryann said, "Don't come in with the idea, 'We are now going to teach Whole Language', because you get peoples' backs up before you even start. . . . We do have brains and we do have feelings." Marilyn talked of the importance of creating a risk-free environment and a climate where people felt free to explore: "First you have to work at developing relationships with the people you are working with. . . and credibility and in very subtle and discreet ways share what your vision is for the school and what your philosophy is about how kids learn best." She stressed the need for "group reflection" and getting people talking about things before even starting the introduction to the change process. Sharon agreed that you can't force anything on people and contends that, "If I were principal I'd make them feel that I was always there and am open to any kind of discussion and come and ask me for any kind of help, and I'll do my best to help." So she saw a need for providing a setting where it was "O.K." to try things and take risks. One of Judy's jobs would be to "make sure that they [teachers] are happy in school, that you can fit as best you can together. And just be a caring, kind person to them." Having a "safe" place to begin the change would appear to be very significant for change to take place.

Once this environment is created it then becomes necessary to try to develop an internal motivation for the change. Some of the teachers felt

that this could not be mandated. Judy emphasized that "you can't change another teacher's philosophy. It has to come from within." As well, Maryann pointed out that if it is not a voluntary commitment that "we can all sabotage things very easily, all of us. We all do it. . . . If I came into you and said, 'Tomorrow you are going to teach math, but this way. How are you going to feel?" External change to Marilyn usually means that "people give lip service and say, 'Yah, that's a good idea,' and then shut their doors and do exactly what they've always done." This is similar to Sharon's view that you want teachers to try things because they want to, not to please you. Becky strongly believed that one of the reasons Green Isle was so successful was because the Whole Language change was a "grass-roots change."

For grassroots change to take place successfully, taking things at a slow pace appeared to be significant. Sandra believed that fewer mistakes would be made if things were taken at a slower rate: "If you jump into it, and everything is Whole Language, there's probably a lot of things that could go wrong." Keeping the change at a gradual pace and focused on things teachers know best, was Jenny's and Marilyn's feeling as well. Moving at leaps and bounds would appear to defeat the purpose.

Also self-defeating would be for everyone to start at the same place in the process. Just as they contend they do for the students, the teachers believed should be done for their peers--start where the teacher is at. Becky suggested looking at the things they do that already meet the curriculum objectives successfully and make them see that they are doing a lot of things right. Once this is accomplished, then you move on. Maryann

talked of a Whole Language continuum and that teachers are strewn all over it and need to be taken from where they're at. Jenny saw this too and suggested showing the teachers all the things they are doing that are positive and valuable before you make any changes. Once you've established where you're at and what you're happy with, then you can look to professional development.

At this point the teachers referred to many elements of professional development that were described earlier, and which were deemed successful. Due to her exposure to other classrooms as a substitute teacher, Sandra believed that class visitations would be very beneficial because seeing is sometimes a lot more meaningful than reading or hearing. Sharon and Marilyn both favored a lot of discussion by staff where ideas and issues are brought out and shared. Trying to reach a consensus with a group of teachers and building group integrity were important to Marilyn who believed that the "blockers" must be given a voice. Maryann and Becky saw the need for developing an understanding of what Whole Language is and what it means to the teachers. Bringing in people to talk to the staff, or providing professional literature are ways to encourage this. One could also model for the teachers--"practice what you preach." Making teachers aware of conferences and inviting them along when you're going might be another tactic to try. Most teachers talked of things that would encourage--make it an invitation more than a mandate. Provide teachers with the opportunities to discuss, view, listen and then hopefully try.

A final consideration that was touched on by several teachers was recognizing the nature of change. Becky perhaps spoke most directly to this point:

> I think you have to go through that process. I don't think that anyone can just take theory and say, ' O.K. I'm ready to implement.' I mean we can't spend all that time on just the theory stage. I think that's the nature of the change process. We have to take a little bit , try it, and we go back and look and it's that cyclical kind of thing.

Others spoke indirectly about the way that teachers try things in little bits, learn more, adjust, and try new things. No one spoke of this change as a complete overnight turn-around. As Jenny said, "I didn't wake up one morning and say, 'I'm a Whole Language teacher today.'" The process is "cyclical", ongoing, and controlled by the teacher.

As teachers spoke of how they'd introduce change into a school, they identified six dimensions: create a supportive environment, start slow, facilitate internal motivation, recognize where the teacher is at, use professional development strategies to increase understanding, and be aware of the nature of change.

Summary of Outcomes

After the implementation of Whole Language, the teachers discussed those things that were meaningful to them. Because the teachers themselves are at different points on the Whole Language continuum we shouldn't expect a lot of "sameness", but there were certain themes that emerged: (1) the teachers now seem to view students as different role players in their classrooms--they interacted more with each other and the teacher; (2) making learning fun and meaningful were now more important to the

teachers; (3) the teachers themselves had to change to achieve these goals and in doing so became greater facilitators--they took students from where they were at and made their programs flexible enough to meet their needs. To do this the teachers also had to change their programs and practices. They used large amounts of good quality literature, integration of subjects, theme units and the use of varied strategies for high student involvement.

To this end, teachers viewed their changes as successful and, having gone through it, had valuable insights on the change process. The teachers discussed six dimensions that they saw as influential: create a supportive environment, start slow, facilitate internal motivation, recognize where the teacher is at, use professional development strategies to increase understanding, and be aware of the nature of change.

Summary of the Findings

The categories described above emerged from the data through the voices of the participants. For the purpose of this study Fullan's four phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, continuation and outcomes were used to focus the presentation and descriptions. Much of the data was so pervasive it may have been included in more than one phase. The reality would seem to be that there is interaction between many of the themes, and that the process moves back and forth along the continuum. The Fullan Model used for presenting the data, brought forward a greater understanding of the change process. Accordingly, the data proved to have great meaning in answering the guiding questions for the study.

CHAPTER 5

Analysis of and Reflections on the Findings

Introduction

This chapter includes an analysis of and some reflections on the findings of the study. The themes which emerged from an exploration of the data will be discussed as they relate to the guiding questions of the study. As stated earlier, these questions were based on Fullan's (1982) factors of implementation. After the study was undertaken, Fullan published an updated second edition (1991) of this book in which he restructured these factors of change and also added another dimension to the implementation phase--underlying themes of the change process. In an attempt to make these findings both meaningful and timely, the new themes Fullan has identified will be discussed as well. However, because these were not part of the study's design, there are limited data to support, refute or explore them in much detail. Nonetheless, several important insights arising from the data would seem to support some of Fullan's perceptions on themes related to successful change practices.

Framework for the Analysis

The discussion of the findings is based on the purpose of this study and the accompanying guiding research questions:

> The purpose of this study is to explore what teachers' perceptions are of successful curriculum innovation. The change focused on is Whole Language instruction within the context of elementary schools.

Research Question #1: What influenced teachers to make a change in curriculum methodologies and philosophies with respect to language arts?

The purpose of this research question is to explore the first phase of the change process--initiation. The findings will be discussed according to Fullan's factors affecting adoption or initiation.

Research Question #2: What circumstances or factors were influential in making the implementation successful at the (a) personal level, (b) local level, (c) district level, and (d) government level?

This second question's purpose was to explore teachers' perceptions of factors contributing to successful implementation and continuation of an innovation. These factors will be discussed according to Fullan's (1991) factors and themes affecting implementation and continuation.

Initiation

As documented in recent literature (Ornstein and Hunkins, 1993; Fullan, 1991; Huberman & Miles, 1984) teachers have their own motives for adopting an innovation. The individual is at the crux of meaningful change--it is at this point that an innovation is internalized or abandoned. This study presented data that supported these claims. Further, initiation is a personal process whereby teachers must decide for themselves whether an innovation will "fit" or not. A second probability that was evident from the findings of this study is that initiation may not involve a quick and clear cut period of time. Initiation may occur over many weeks, months or years and may interact with implementation as it takes hold. Keeping these things in mind, the findings on initiation will be discussed using Fullan's

(1991) eight factors: quality and existence of innovations, access to information, advocacy from Central Office, teacher advocacy, external change agents, community pressure/ support/apathy, new policy/funds (federal, or provincial), and problem solving and bureaucratic orientations. Of these eight factors, it can be said that in this study some were near nonexistent while others were very influential. As Fullan stated, however, the combination of two or three of these can produce powerful motivations for change. Also noteworthy, these may be better associated with "planned change" rather than "natural occurring" change. Realizing these limitations, there will also be a discussion based on Fullan's considerations of initiation including the three R's: relevance, readiness and resources.

Fullan's Eight Factors Affecting Initiation

The quality and existence of the innovation. The quality and existence of the Whole Language innovation is somewhat enigmatic. It is not a youthful movement and may have had different names attached, or have been part of other programs over the years: language experience, child-centered learning, enterprise system, etc. As a single document or program it is difficult to judge or describe. Most of the teachers in this study did not go out their doors one day and say, "I'm going out to learn about Whole Language so I can be a Whole Language teacher." The philosophy does not necessarily lead to, and would not propose, a pre-canned program readily available in a teacher's manual. This would agree with one of Fullan's claims that many innovations are not just "out there." They are locally developed or interpreted. Moreover, most of the teachers in this study experienced their initiation phase at different time periods.

For some it all started close to twenty years ago and for others about five or six years ago. The state of Whole Language was constantly transforming and changing and so it would be hard to pin-point for anybody what its quality was like during their adoption of it, if we could even pin-point that phase.

What would seem to be important here is that the innovation was adopted with careful consideration and was largely developed locally. The teachers, after becoming aware of the Whole Language approach, sought out information about it in numerous ways (conferences, workshops, professional resources, other teachers, etc.). At that time the program held promise of better, more meaningful, and more interesting learning. Generally, as teachers began to understand the philosophy, they began to identify more with the name; but it seemed that the former came first in all cases.

What appeared to have drawn teachers to the Whole Language innovation was its attractive features, which varied from teacher to teacher. Among the more common reasons was its "fit" for the students and the teachers. The Whole Language philosophy offered better learning practices that would see students more involved with each other, the teacher and the crucial processes of learning. Classroom management was easier and teacher work was more sensible.

Looking at what the Whole Language program had to offer, teachers found that they had real cause to change from their existing practices. In as far as the program was not a planned or pre-packaged innovation, the teachers had little concept of what it was going to mean down the road.

They seemed to take it a little bit at a time, experimented, evaluated and tried some more. This would agree with Fullan's claim that people adapt innovations to their own situations and that many are developed locally within the school's, or teacher's context.

Access to information. Fullan's second factor is access to information. He noted that it is of primary importance that there be personal contact between teachers. This would seem to hold true for most teachers in this study. They all described situations where fellow teachers or other contacts provided them with needed information. However, others received much of this through external sources at conferences and workshops or through their own reading of professional resources. Another one of his contentions is that most teacher innovations do not go beyond their own classroom doors. This, however, would seem to be dependent on the culture of each school. The Green Isle School had very tight-knit and functional groups of teachers who shared information on a continuous basis. In Ridgewood and Parkhill the teachers had their own networks which they made use of: colleagues, both in and out of their school, former colleagues, teacher mentors, etc. For all of the schools it was easy to attend professional development sessions as they were close to a large city. Professional literature was available, not necessarily on their school site, but within their grasp. Some teachers commented that had the resources been more readily available they may have had an easier time of it, and less confusion would have been experienced.

Central office advocacy. Central office advocacy has been identified by Fullan as being crucial to many innovations. Although this is

probably true in many planned changes, it was not a real force in this study. Teachers had little or no contact with central office staff except to assist them with resources or help with some implementation ideas. Central Office personnel had little impact on teachers deciding if they were going to go ahead with the change to Whole Language, and no evidence was available to indicate that they were involved in developing teacher awareness of Whole Language.

Teacher advocacy. Although Central office advocacy was minimal, teacher advocacy was not. As Fullan recognized, other teachers are often the preferred source of ideas for innovations, and are often overlooked in this capacity due to either the limited number of teachers they affect, or the limited publicity they receive. Little's (1982) study, instrumental in this revelation, supported this conclusion. This study also supports the assertion since all the teachers had to some degree been motivated, or supported, by other teachers during their initiation phase. The Green Isle teachers had continuous and practical contact with each other. Two of the other teachers spoke of numerous situations that saw them team teach, plan and dialogue on teaching issues and practices. Still two others made mention of the involvement of fellow teachers, although in less intensive ways. What was also instrumental in this regard was the teacher's sense of professional efficacy--the desire to always improve and change when change was perceived as good. Fullan (1991) refered to this as "norms for continuous improvement." In the broader sense of the term it would include administrators planning and designing with their staffs. This was a fact for Green Isle School, and less so with the other two

schools where administrators were less involved. Although, in all three locations the teachers experienced and valued colleagues who assisted them in the start of their journey. This was discussed earlier under the heading of "commitment to growth and change." It would appear that teacher advocacy was influential for the teachers in this study, and it would also appear that it was fairly localized and, as Fullan predicted, did not spread to envelop total districts.

External change agents. Outside the district there are various consultants and resource people who Fullan calls "external change agents." These are referred to again in a planned change context and have little impact here. As stated earlier there was limited contact with consultants at the district level, and outside of this none were mentioned. In this particular innovation they were not role players, except when contact was made incidentally at various conferences and workshops where they would play more of a "one-time" professional development role.

Community support/pressure/apathy. Inside the district the influence of the community might be another factor. Fullan explained that the community may be supportive, opposing, or apathetic to an innovation. He identified four impacts that a community could have on a change. Generally the schools in this study may have had insights into one of these. The study seemed to substantiate that communities do not, for the most part, participate in school innovations. Parents were not invited to participate in most teacher's reflections on their practices, even if they were kept informed. As discussed earlier, parents had involvement and access to the classroom, but little input into its actual development. Parent

meetings were viewed as "information assemblies" and "open houses" rather than meetings to formulate classroom practice. The teachers respected parents and consciously involved them in their programs, but parents did not seem to affect their motivation for making the changes they did.

New policies and funding. New policies and funding were other factors that had little influence on teacher change in this study. Government mandates, grants and the like were not mentioned at all in teachers' interviews. Although some provincial policies are related to this innovation (e.g. Language Arts curriculum guide, Program Continuity policy) none were noted as having any kind of a influence on teacher motivation. Fullan suggested that funding and/or resources are often part of an innovation's perks, and that often times government documents initiate change. There may be some policies that parallel Whole Language practices and these may have had some impact on teacher's beliefs, but only indirectly and perhaps only unconsciously since no teacher even made mention of it.

Problem solving and bureaucratic orientations. On a district or governmental level there is also the problem solving and bureaucratic orientations. Districts will adopt certain innovations if they receive further funding, resources, or favor with the community. Faddism and popular innovations may play a role in initiation. Surface changes, or first order changes, take place to relieve public or governmental pressures rather than help to improve and attend to real educational problems. According to Fullan, many innovations pass down this road where there is an "illusion of

change" but little meaningful change. The political and symbolic value of a change has more significance than the educational merit of the program. If we can scale this conception down to the local level and to the teachers of this study it would collapse. Teachers spoke of no rewards in terms of resources, funds or community support if they made the change to Whole Language. There was no pressure to change except for one teacher who couldn't say where it came from or even if it was really influential. The teachers did not perceive themselves changing for acceptance by their peers or their administration. For these teachers, they changed on educational merit alone--to improve the learning environment for their students, and make themselves more effective teachers.

The eight factors of initiation described above help to clarify the teachers' sources of motivation: quality and existence of innovations, access to information, advocacy from Central Office, teacher advocacy, external change agents, community pressure/ support/apathy, new policy/funds (federal or provincial), and problem solving and bureaucratic orientations. Yet, to some extent the impact of these eight factors loses the focus that the teachers described in their interviews.

The 3 R's of Initiation

Fullan (1991) recognized in his newer edition other emergent forces which he identified as the 3 R's: relevance, readiness and resources. These further considerations were meant to provide further insights into the initiation process, and they definitely do so in this study.

Relevance. Relevance is described by Fullan as a teacher's perceptions of the need, clarity and utility of an innovation. What has it to

offer to students and teachers? One force described by most teachers concerning their decision to become involved in the Whole Language change process focused upon the well being of the students and themselves. Most teachers recognized that the children were not doing as well as they should, that those with problems in reading were not improving as well as they should, and that the classroom environment was not as happy as it should have been. Because of these re-occurring problems in the classroom, the teachers were very frustrated and in many ways felt that the program was inadequate. This was discussed most by the teachers at Green Isle. Judy asked herself how she was any different than a parent volunteer.

> They could pick up a guide book and do exactly what I was doing. I didn't see where I was really different than somebody that could walk in off the street and read the guidebook--it's like a cookbook... do what it says. . . . I was getting really frustrated and I thought there's got to be something better.

In actuality she was questioning her very professionalism, and the worth of what she was doing. Further, Judy even questioned if this career was really for her. She was disgruntled with the traditional teaching methods and their disappointing results. Becky also had a look at herself professionally because of an assignment given to her by a university instructor while she was taking a curriculum course. As with Judy, the self-reflection added insights to her doubt about her present teaching strategies and beliefs. Becky expressed similar feelings to Judy's, but focused more on the actual impact on the students. Their behavior was telling her that traditional teaching approaches were not satisfactory for her students: "I just knew they weren't learning to read this way." Sharon

had the feeling that after many experiences as a teacher she was going to try new things because she felt it would make her a better teacher and the students would benefit more. She felt she would be more excited and to her that makes the students more excited.

The teachers were emotionally upset with their roles as teachers. What they saw in the classroom everyday was a contradiction to their purpose as teachers. The frustration with their present position and the desire to become better teachers influenced them to step into the new innovation. The frustration came out clearly in the interviews, and the desire was obvious to the observer. They were "hungry" to learn more about how to teach effectively, and willing to sacrifice more effort, time and even security to become better at what they did.

Two of the teachers at Ridgewood were not fond of the old traditional ways either. They did not devote as much time or emotion to discussing it, but conveyed a similar story of dissatisfaction with the student outcomes, and with their overall perception of the classroom. Maryann noted, for example, that students today have different needs than they used to. Although they didn't seem to have the strong distaste of the "older" ways, they looked for change to increase learning in the classroom and their own effectiveness.

The teachers at Parkhill had very gradual changes and did not speak against their "older" ways, but did comment that the only reason they changed was because Whole Language had solutions to some of their problems. The only way they would change is if the changes met some needs in the classroom.

Once again, because Whole Language was a naturally occurring change, it's difficult to describe the perception that teachers had of it previous to implementation. Most discussed certain ideas they liked first and then would try things in small increments. Clarity of understanding seemed to come with practice and experience. The lack of clarity was not a barrier to their initiation, but part of their journey to where they are now. It obviously did not prevent them from stepping into the innovation.

Relevance would seem to be the prime motivation behind the teachers' change to Whole Language. They perceived a need in their classroom and sought out better practices. The innovation was relevant to them because it was seen as something better for the students and it made their job more enjoyable.

Readiness. The second "R" identified by Fullan is readiness. Two questions asked here are (1) Did the teachers possess the requisite knowledge and skills, time, etc. to adopt the change? and (2) Did they have the capacity to use reform? The teachers in this study proved they had the capacity to use reforms by taking control of the change process. They did not "throw the baby out with the bathwater." Instead the approach was enthusiastic but cautious. Knowledge and skills were attained in increments, and time was committed to the innovation according to what they could give. Their capacity for initiation came from their strong desire to change and their control over the innovation. There were no timelines to meet, mandates to satisfy or pressures to subside. They were ready to take on change within their own individual contexts. Some did so quicker than others, but that's what made for effective adoption. One

teacher commented that if this change were top-down it probably would have been sabotaged and there would have been many teachers with heels dug in. The teachers' commitment to the change process is part of their readiness as well. They all mentioned their roles as professionals would have them constantly changing and improving--keeping up with the times. Change was an attitude, a belief that things only get better if you keep moving and adapting. Their readiness for change was not limited to this innovation, but was a part of their professional, teacher efficacy. Moreover it is wise to remember that initiation is not limited to the start of implementation. There is definitely interaction and overlap. As some teachers said, you try little bits, see improvement, get more confident, buy into the innovation more and try some more. The readiness factor is ongoing and would seem to grow with time.

Resources. The last "R", resources, is time bound as well. The teachers described their resources as growing each passing year. Classroom libraries build up as do professional resources. However, the feeling by most was that without the literature based on high interest and multiple levels for students, Whole Language would have had a tough road. The availability of new reading series was mentioned by most teachers. This was more instrumental for some than others, but even so was a stepping stone to acquiring the resources wanted by those teachers. It was a sign of more flexible planning and more options in the reading program according to Marilyn at Ridgewood School. The Parkhill teachers discussed the importance of "big books" and "little books" as important in their transition. Maryann claimed that Whole Language would have died

without the resources, as she remembers when all she had was one reading series and that was it. Classroom libraries were important for the Green Isle teachers and their librarian was instrumental in getting good quality literature and increasing the use of the library. Resources were needed for their research projects as well. Moreover, professional resources became influential as teachers read-up on things that concerned them. The impact they had is difficult to measure, but they were part of the initiation phase. Most of their first steps into Whole Language involved becoming familiar with recent literature. Resources in the form of literature for the students and professional literature for the teachers were instrumental in their adoption of the innovation.

Summary of Initiation

The three R's (relevance, readiness, and resources) provide us with the most meaningful analysis of why the teachers chose to adopt the Whole Language innovation. The students' needs were paramount to all teachers as were teachers' capacities to change. Many felt frustrated with the "old" ways and were unhappy filling the traditional roles. They were seeking better practices and found them in Whole Language. Initiation was not a single point in time in their change process, but was ongoing as they encountered more successful experiences. The resources helped to support their endeavors by providing their students with high-quality, child-centred literature; and, also providing them with the professional readings they needed to affirm that what they were doing was beneficial for the children.

Other factors affected their decision to buy into Whole Language as well: the quality of the program, access to information, teacher advocacy,

and problem solving orientations. Supporting Fullan, the findings of this study would indicate that teachers gain a stronger motivation to change from a variety of sources, and that the combination of these lead to effective initiation. Further, the small scale of this study would support his contention that success is more likely in smaller, more personal contexts. The larger the innovation, the less likely it is to succeed. Several of his eight factors were not influential in their initiation phase, and perhaps the least influential of all were the roles at the government level and district office level.

Implementation and Continuation

In attempting to answer the second guiding question of this study, an exploration of what happens at every level of the innovation's implementation was undertaken. What made it successful? What people influenced the change? What events influenced the change? As described earlier, Fullan's revised model of nine factors affecting implementation, which is presented in Figure 1, was employed to reflect on the findings: Characteristics of the change include (1) need, (2) clarity, (3) complexity, and (4) quality and practicality; Local Characteristics include the (5) district, (6) community, (7) principal, and (8) teacher; and External Factors include the (9) government and other agencies. Next, Fullan's six themes (based on Louis & Miles 1990 study) of improving the implementation process, are then examined in the context of this study. Fullan maintained that these six themes are indicative of the dynamics occurring in schools. These themes include (1)initiative taking and empowerment, (2) staff development/resource assistance, (3) restructuring,

(4) monitoring/problem coping, (5) evolutionary planning, and (6) vision-building.

There is every possibility that many of the categories and themes pervade more than one level, but they are discussed at the level where they might have had the most influence. As well, it would seem that the findings of this study support Fullan's claim that the various factors and themes interact. It would be naive to think that they act independent of each other since they are often occurring at the same time with one feeding off of, and encouraging the other. For example, a useful professional resource becomes one teacher's "bible" for her implementation, but this is introduced to her by a fellow teacher who often collaborates with her. It then leads her to attend several conferences on the topic where she gains more insights and learns of other valuable resources. This kind of interchange between the factors would seem to be the norm, and were described by the teachers participating in this study.

Characteristics of the Change Affecting Implementation.

Recognizing that this first category is somewhat repetitive of processes in initiation, Fullan suggests that they would not be resolved during adoption, but were ongoing well into implementation where they

A. Characteristics of the Change

1. **Need and relevance of the change**
2. **Clarity**
3. **Complexity**
4. **Quality and practicality of program (materials, etc.)**

B. Characteristics at the School District Level

5. **Central administrative support and involvement**
6. **Board and community characteristics**
7. **The principal**
8. **The teacher**

D. Characteristics External to the Local System

9. **Government and other agencies**

Figure 1: Fullan's Factors Affecting Implementation

become more "visible." The teachers' perceptions of needs, clarity, complexity and quality were discussed earlier with respect to initiation, so only Fullan's contentions regarding these four factors with respect to implementation will be discussed as they relate to this study's findings.

Needs. It was stated earlier that the needs of the students and the teachers themselves were the prime motivators for the teachers changing to Whole Language. Fullan suggested that these needs take on clarity as implementation occurs. When asked in the interview what attracted them to Whole Language, most teachers responded by describing what they saw as positive effects it was having on the students. They hardly mentioned the initial experimentations they had. Yet when asked again about their perceptions of Whole Language before they began, some replied that they really knew little of its practices or background. For example, Becky stated "I didn't know another approach at that time. I didn't have an understanding of another approach. I just knew that they weren't learning to read this [traditional] way." Marilyn reflected on her experiences and remembered that she was not aware of an alternative to the "traditional" methods either. After inservices, discussion with colleagues, and reading she began to construct her own meaning and implement it into the classroom. So needs would seem to be present to begin the teachers' search for better ways, but they would change and develop as teachers learned more through experimentation.

A second point Fullan raised was that the needs interact with the other eight factors. This has been discussed and mentioned several times and has been established in this study. As teachers learned more and were

exposed to more their needs became clearer, were sometimes modified and often new ones emerged. For example, getting students to read better was an initial need. After this was beginning to be realized, new evaluation strategies were needed. To satisfy this need, discussion with colleagues, reading of related literature, and other professional development occurred.

A final point on needs is raised by Huberman and Miles (1984). They suggested that for implementation to continue, people must perceive that early trials are showing some tangible signs of improvement. This was supported in this study by at least three teachers who commented on their trial and error approach. As they tried new ideas they would see benefits in the way students were learning and then they would try more. Early success certainly affected further attempts. The bottom line for most teachers was that if it works for the students then they'll do it.

Clarity and complexity. Clarity and complexity of the Whole Language innovation were apparent but not really at issue. Fullan found that, generally, the greater the complexity of an innovation, the greater the problem of clarity. Frustration, confusion and uncertainty can bog down the implementation process. This would seem to be logical and for many planned changes, probably true. Yet for this innovation the problem of clarity was not discussed by any of the teachers in negative terms. Rather when there were concerns about the direction the change was going, teachers viewed this as just a part of the process. When asked to describe barriers or roadblocks teachers struggled to find anything that had concrete, adverse effects. Confusion over the meaning of the innovation, or how to proceed were issues that seldom were mentioned, and when they

were, teachers felt compelled to learn more, not back away from the implementation. This may have again been the result of teachers being in control of their own change process, or the support network they were able to build around themselves. Some innovations with unclear goals and procedures produce an effect that Fullan calls "false clarity" where people over simplify or misinterpret the goals of an innovation. This would appear not to be the case in this study, since the outcomes were fairly specific and the practices were clearly different than at the start of their implementation. The literature on Whole Language would seem to support the claim that the participating teachers' beliefs and methodologies were within its basic tenets.

The complexity of the change, according to this researcher, would seem to be fairly high since it involved changes in teacher curriculum, teaching practices and for many their beliefs on how children learn. Fullan suggested that with increased complexity comes greater change--that "nothing ventured, nothing gained" appears to hold true in the change process. This study would support that the deeper, more meaningful kinds of innovations are implemented more successfully. Changes were not superficial or first order in nature, but were part of the teacher belief systems. As Fullan advised, these types of changes need to be taken on incrementally; and the teachers in this study did this by making the changes conform to their needs. Small steps were taken so as to not create confusion or lack of clarity in their classrooms.

Quality of the innovation. Finally, the quality of the innovation was discussed earlier during the initiation phase and it was established that

although Whole Language was not well understood by the teachers at the start of their change process, they perceived it as a viable avenue to improve learning. What is important here is not that the term "Whole Language" was accepted as an alternative methodology, but that its practices were recognized and "bought into." Fullan spoke of the "practicality ethic" which most times sees teachers adopt and implement only those changes that "fit" with their style of teaching or with salient needs in their classes. This study also supports this contention as the teachers spoke of the innovation as "making more sense" and just "fitting" better. The classroom is the real test and if the students show no improvement those practices are modified or dropped. Further, Fullan maintained that deeper meaningful change only develops with time, and teachers cannot be told what to do or shown how to do it. The stage of "ambivalence" is a necessary part of the process before arriving at a new vision. The findings of this study uphold this belief as teachers described their changes occurring over a number of years and occurring very gradually. The trial and error approach was used in small increments, or steps that were conducive to their own situations. Many teachers described struggles they had, but again, in a manner that made it "O.K." The times they were unclear about what to do next or how to implement a practice into their classes, were looked upon as times of growth. As Marilyn asserted, "I think that's where a lot of the growth occurs. That's when you really grow as a professional--when you really struggle. That's life in general." The desire to learn more and be a better teacher is an attitude

with these teachers, and in their own minds they are confident in what they do, and in the quality of the program they implement.

Summary of the characteristics of change. The teachers had practical needs at the start of their journey, and through the interaction of initiation and implementation, these were either met or modified and new needs arose. After experimentation and some professional development, teachers saw improvement and were enticed to try more. The needs evolved as the process of change unfolded. Because of this, teachers often did not have a clear vision of where they were going, but through experience and time the vision became clearer. Some of the teachers presently say they still don't see this as ending; they still have new roads to travel, and would claim that next year their programs would be different than this year. The Whole Language innovation is fairly complex, but this did not hinder its implementation, indeed it may have strengthened it. The teachers' perceptions of where they wanted to be seemed to override their frustrations along the way. They approached the innovation from a practical need in their classrooms, interpreted it as being a viable solution, and were champions of their own implementation.

Local Characteristics Affecting Implementation/Continuation

As teachers go through the process of identifying needs and clarifying the directions they wish to take, other factors also influence their decisions. Fullan suggested that at the local level these can emerge from four general sources: the school district, the board and community, the principal and teachers. Two of these were found to have more direct

impact than the others, but as pointed out earlier, the more factors that interact and support the change, the better.

The school district. Central office administrators were indirectly supportive but for the most part absent throughout the change process. As discussed in the findings, first they were supportive of the change because it was assumed they knew what was going on in the school and did not question it. Second, they were indirectly involved due to the resources they provided to some of the schools. Third, they had on staff, consultants (when there were a greater number of them) that influenced one school. Fullan suggested that district office is crucial to district-wide innovation--that without its support district wide change is unlikely. Individual teachers and individual schools can change, but to have that change district-wide often means there must be directions and support from central office. The innovation investigated in this study was at best school wide, and in most cases confined to only small groups within a school. The only exception might be Green Isle School. It was mentioned in the interviews that there was a neighboring school to which Green Isle fed their students. The problem discussed was that their teaching practices and evaluation practices were far from consistent. Even after meetings and dialogue, agreement was hard to reach. Perhaps this illustrates the difficulty change would experience without the advocacy from district office. Based just on this one anecdote, this contention can neither be supported nor refuted. If the small size of the schools in this study and its apparent successes is any indication, however, the success of change may improve as size and magnitude decrease. In any case, with respect to this particular innovation,

district office's role may be interpreted as neutral. The question is to what degree did this actually influence the teachers? Did it create problems that could have been otherwise diverted? Did it inhibit the actions of the teachers in any way? Did it make the process more difficult for the teachers? What may have occurred if central office was supportive in very concrete, proactive ways? Questions like these need to be addressed to discover if central office is indeed influential with teachers as they consider changes and take part in them. Perhaps the teachers would feel no different and experience nothing more if they were observably supported by them. It remains an issue open to further study.

Board and community characteristics. As with the district office influence, the school boards, as perceived by the teachers, were not influential in the teacher implementation of Whole Language. The Board was not once referred to in any of the interviews and would appear to be a non-entity in the process. For this reason, Fullan's assertions (based on LaRocque & Coleman's study), that school boards engaged in this process with clear visions based on firm understandings of issues are crucial to the process, cannot be commented on. However, it can be said that individual schools or individual teachers can successfully initiate and implement changes without school board support; and, that this is probably more the rule than the exception.

The community had a much larger role in the innovation than did the Board. Whether the community was directly influential might be debated by the teachers in this study, but as supported in the findings, the parents were looked upon by all the teachers as substantial stakeholders in the

students' education. The teachers all described the parents as very involved in their programs and, as stated earlier, this was in largely a receptive role. Teachers described their "information sessions" in slightly different ways, but in the context of a one-way communication process. This should not be interpreted as particularly negative. It's not the view of this researcher that parents had no voice in the programs, but that at this time the voice is a small one. Even so, the teachers do demonstrate that they involve the parents by keeping them up to date and knowledgeable about their practices. Interestingly enough, none of the teachers described any negative experiences with parents beyond the one or two throughout a career that are in most cases unavoidable. Perhaps this is partially due to the fact that they know they have an open invitation to the teachers' classrooms and that they were kept informed about programs in the class. Many community members are actively involved in the volunteer aspect as well--this was mentioned by several teachers as useful in providing very valuable P.R. As one teacher said, "This is not a gossipy community, but they do talk." If the parents are in the class and a part of the process of learning, this may produce increased support in the community at large. To this end, successful program practices in the classroom creates support for the teachers and indirectly parent support for their innovations. Fullan suggested that in districts where parents were discounted complex innovations often were not accepted by the community. Yet, in schools where teacher/parent interaction is great, trust is developed and reservations subside. Another teacher commented that this support does not come easily--it has to be worked at and nourished. The teachers in this

study went out of their way to involve parents. The example of the teacher at Green Isle School who set-up her journals to invite parent comments each week is one example. Two other teachers described a reading program that had books being practiced at home for shared reading in the classroom. So the support from parents may be a direct result of three things: being involved in the volunteer programs, being regularly informed by teachers of the program's practices, and being involved by doing school related activities at home. If these things were not being done on a consistent basis, perhaps the results of this implementation would have been quite different.

The community influence had an impact on all teachers, but the experience at Green Isle deserves special consideration because of its status as a "community school." The influence of the community school was important in two ways. First, it provided a philosophy that was very compatible with Whole Language. Second, it provided the teachers with a successful change experience. The community school embraces a number of beliefs which are shared by Whole Language supporters. Parents are involved in the school in meaningful ways, students are respected as both teachers and learners, community experts and resources are shared in the school and decision making is shared by all stakeholders. In effect, education is a team effort involving the parents, the children, others in the community, and the school. The fact that the teachers enjoyed this relationship and worked well within it suggests that their nature is already predisposed to the Whole Language philosophy. Perhaps the atmosphere

already existing in the school because of the community school innovation eased the transition process for Whole Language.

Predisposition to change might be influenced by past experiences with other changes. In the experience of the Green Isle teachers, they were involved in the school becoming a community school, and they were successful. This could have had a bearing on their decision to try innovations again. This is not a new notion by any means, but should be recognized as an important influence. Fullan made this assertion, stating that after a number of failed innovations occur in school districts, the bitter taste makes it hard to initiate even good innovations. So once again, the predisposition of an individual can be interpreted by understanding past experiences and where they're at on the innovation continuum. The community school benefitted the teachers at Green Isle by encouraging change, with which they have experienced success, and by providing a belief system in agreement with the Whole Language innovation.

The community school had positive effects on another aspect of the innovations--involving parents. The parents must be recognized as part of the school and they are certainly extremely important stakeholders. It is their children that are being effected by these new beliefs and consequently they need to be included in the change process. Green Isle teachers realized this immediately and through great efforts gained the support and respect of the parents. They recognized too, that the involvement could not be superficial, but had to be real and meaningful. Parents were brought in to learn about the changes as the teachers did. It was not a one shot affair, but an evolving relationship that developed as the innovation did. Parents

were utilized for their expertise and experiences that they could share with the students. Thus support and trust from the parents were won--this served to strengthen the change process and those involved in it.

The community school influence illustrates that parents must be meaningfully involved and informed about the change to increase its chance to succeed, that one innovation can positively affect the next, and that attitudes may be strengthened by the multi-dimensionality of more than one change occurring simultaneously. An instrumental role player in these matters is the most influential person in the school--the principal.

The principal. The "gate keeper" of the school is no longer an apt description for principals concerned about meaningful change. Fullan suggested that principals need to take more of a proactive leadership role in the change process. Research suggests that in most successful change the principal needs to be a positive influence. This influence up to now has been largely a supportive role rather than an active leadership role. Recent studies (Leithwood and Montgomery, 1992; Fullan, 1991; Sarason, 1982) have shown that principals spend most of their time on managerial jobs and that "no news is good news." Terms like "crisis management" are often used to describe their roles. Further, the number of managerial jobs they now must complete are growing in numbers and so the time for instructional leadership seems to be even less than before. Understanding the context of the principal, Fullan keyed in on the two characteristics of effective leaders as they relate to the change process: "They showed an active interest by spending time talking with teachers, planning, helping teachers get together, and being knowledgeable about what was happening.

And they all figured out ways of reducing the amount of time spent on routine administrative matters." The principal is now given the task of changing the culture of the school so that school improvement is ongoing with vision building guiding the way.

Four of the seven teachers in this study described their administrators as proactive and involved in their change. The findings established that they thought of their principals as effective change facilitators and as such they had influenced their implementations. The other three teachers agreed that their administrators were supportive, but described their role as more reactive in that they let the teachers do what they thought was best, and were there if they needed them, but otherwise were not really involved. The fact that all teachers felt the principals supported their change efforts, at least by providing no resistance, had positive influences. Many commented that had the principal been opposed things could have been much different. Even this limited involvement still gives the principal great power in the change process. One gets the feeling that teachers still look for the "nod" to go ahead with something, or a gesture of their disapproval. A reactive-supportive role of the principal contributes to the implementation, even if comparatively less than the proactive role of the principal.

The findings become even more insightful if we go one step further and study the four teachers who claimed that their administrators were more than reactive in their support The four teachers had only positive things to say about the influence of their principals on their change processes. What was identified as being influential for their success? He

had to be supportive of the change and the new ideas it brought with it. This means that he had to respect the teachers as professionals and allow them room to grow as such. At the same time, if things were looking rough he had to be there to listen and share in the trials. He helped encourage sharing and collaboration on the staff, and was a model himself by having shared decision making. As well, when resources were needed by the teachers he tried his best to accommodate them. He sacrificed some of his time to allow the teachers to make good use of it, and he showed interest by participating in a number of the group share meetings and offering advice when it was asked for. And very importantly, he was not a threat to them and did not try to force his way of thinking on anyone else.

It appears then that the proactive principals had a substantial influence on the teachers' implementations. The teachers could only be inspired by the principals' support and they could trust them enough to take risks knowing they'd have their full support. They appeared to have the characteristics as identified by Fullan earlier: spending time with their staffs directly involved with the change, and finding ways to reduce their managerial functions and become better instructional leaders. The other three teachers had more of a reactive support from their principals, and even so, seemed to be influenced to some degree revealing how powerful the school administration is in change efforts.

The vice-principal of the Green Isle School also became very significant in the change process. As part of the local school administration team, Fullan noted, assistant principals have received little attention in recent research, and as such little is said about them. As one of the

"significant others" in the findings the vice-principal at Green Isle was a voice in the teachers' descriptions. She was supportive and quite connected to the teachers on staff, but she also had another attribute--she was knowledgeable about the change. Her knowledge about the Whole Language philosophy seemed to make her a force in the change process. She was turning the library into the focus of the school, and actively taking part in the change. It's uncertain how much she influenced the teachers actions with respect to their practices in the classroom. It is clear, however, that she had the teachers' and students' respect. Her role may be interpreted as a low-key change facilitator. Perhaps it is the low-key approach that she took as an administrator that helped her win such approval. She worked with the teachers and did not try to appear as "the one with the answers." The descriptions of her by her teachers would indicate many of the same qualities that Fullan gave credence to above for principals. As such she can be a model for other significant change facilitators to follow.

The teacher

Educational change depends on what teachers do and think--it's as simple and complex as that. (Fullan, 1991)

Fullan (1991) suggested that two elements are crucial to the teachers' role in implementation: their individual characteristics, and collegial or collective factors. The first relates to the teacher's psychological and personal predisposition to change and the change process. Such factors as experience teaching, experiences with other innovations and personality can naturally have great impacts on how they view their roles in school

improvement. Even the culture of the school can affect their decisions and attitudes about new innovations. This study supports three assertions: (1) that with experience comes increased confidence to make changes, (2) that personality and past experience influence decisions to change, and (3) that school climate or culture impacts a teacher's change efforts. At least three teachers described their practices early in their teaching career as being very traditional--doing things as others did--because they thought that's the way they should be done. They claimed that they were not comfortable with such teaching practices, but followed them because they did not feel experienced enough, or confident enough to change them. One teacher explained that in her first year of teaching she had a very challenging group of students. This influenced her to teach in very resourceful ways. However, after that she went back to the methods used by the more traditional teachers within her school. Another claimed that with experience came the confidence to take more initiatives and develop the program as she saw fit. This building of confidence and trust in one's professional judgement clearly affected three teachers in their timing to tackle innovative changes. Without it they relied on their perceptions of the most accepted methods of teaching within the particular school they were in.

A teacher's personality and past experiences are influential in the change process. As the findings of this study reveal, the teachers all had a commitment to the change process. They all felt they were effective teachers because they stayed "on top of things" and changed with the times. They purposely investigated and learned about new educational

innovations, how to test their validity, and how well they would "fit" into their classroom practices as well as how well they would "fit" their students' needs. Two teachers spoke of their new experiences with cooperative learning, two spoke of new assessment procedures, another spoke of changes to parent/teacher conferences. Their practices certainly support one teacher's claim that they believe in "everyone a teacher--everyone a learner." This type of "personality" would certainly seem to be instrumental in any effort by a school to introduce innovations. A second dimension of a teacher's predisposition to change may come from their past experiences with change. Again, in all cases the teachers in this study reported that they had fairly positive change experiences. The anecdotes were varied and often times interacted with the Whole Language innovation, but always were interpreted as positive. Not to suggest that all their experiences with change were favorable, but that their impressions of change were shaped positively by past experience. This no doubt contributed to their strong self-efficacy and attitude that change is part of one's professional duty as a teacher. As Fullan (1991) and Rozenholtz (1989) claimed--teacher certainty and commitment strengthen each other. As teachers' change experiences reflect positively so does their passion to do even better.

The third contention that other teachers affect a teacher's change efforts, vis a' vis school climate or culture, is perhaps the most convincing and enlightening finding of this study. Fullan (1991, p.77) claimed that peer interaction "is the primary basis for social learning. . . . New meaning, new behaviors, new skills, and new beliefs depend significantly

on whether teachers are working as isolated individuals (Goodlad, 1984; Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1982), or are exchanging ideas, support, and positive feeling about their work." This working culture that Fullan speaks of has been found to be strongly related to implementation. The one-on-one communication, or group talk sessions are of primacy for teachers to extrapolate what the meaning of educational change really is--what it is that the school and students really need. Based on Rozenholtz's 1989 research, Fullan (1991) developed a model, summarized in Figure 2, to explain the relationships between teachers and innovations in "learning-enriched" schools. The interaction among teachers that results in learning for themselves and the students is powerful. The teachers in this study described contexts that support the claim that collaboration strongly impacts on teachers' implementations. As described in the findings, these contexts can be studied from two perspectives: the team influence and situational collegial influences. The former describes the experience that the teachers at Green Isle School had.

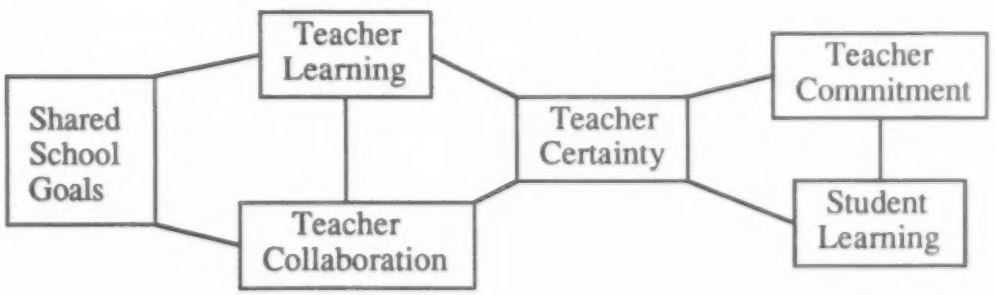

Figure 2. Learning Enriched Schools

The team, or support group, at Green Isle was made up of anyone on staff who was concerned about helping themselves and others to improve the education of the students. It was an informal group that met to share ideas, materials, problems, solutions and stories. It was a safety net for anyone that wanted the support. The teachers made frequent reference to it and it obviously played an enormous role in their success.

The positive effects of team collaboration are clear in this study, but what makes for such a success? The school support group had a number of characteristics that made it attractive during the change process. First, it was strictly voluntary due to other commitments of teachers after school hours. There was no formal membership. Teachers just showed up on the days that they could, otherwise there were no hard commitments. Second, the group shared everything from new ideas to new problems. The collective synergy was invaluable. Resources were amassed and shared as needs arose. Third, the team had a collective voice for requesting items to meet the needs of the group. Fourth, support was always there for teachers no matter when they might need it--it was in the local school so reassurance could be found at all times. Fifth, social interaction was part of the team support group--friendships were strengthened and found. This team support group illustrated the power of collaboration during the change process.

Teachers from the other two schools in this study discussed other situational-collegial influences. One involved two teacher mentors, another an informal group of teachers from within and outside the school, two were sharing with other grade level teachers in the school, and still another

involved interaction with teachers while substitute teaching. It would be impossible to ascertain which situation may have had more impact than another, but the evidence is quite clear that teachers support and encourage teachers. Here again there was evidence of teachers planning together, sharing resources and ideas, discussing issues related to their change, supporting each other when things didn't go well, and just "being there." As with the Green Isle team, the interaction clarified and affirmed what they were doing as right for their students and provided a support network within which to work.

Fullan discussed at length the danger of superficial collaboration for the sake of one project or goal. Further, are poor teaching practices being promoted through collective support? Is teacher collaboration really teacher conspiracy for some innovations? Although this is a concern, it did not seem to be a factor in this study. The teachers voiced many times that students came first and what worked with them was the key to successful change implementation. With this bottom-line safety net or "crap-detector," good change is likely to be internalized, while bad changes are discarded. The teachers discussed the validity of the innovation, read about it, sought expert speakers and consultants, tried it, and reflected on it. This process of seeking to understand the innovation, and commitment to the students' interests minimized any danger of collective cynicism in the cases which were the subject of this study.

Teacher collaboration can develop in many forms such as teams, small groups, informal groups, formal groups, internal groups, and external groups. But the evidence from this study supports the conclusion

that teacher-teacher interaction is the most powerful influence on implementation. Teachers know teachers, trust teachers, relate best to teachers, and respect teachers. This relationship can facilitate the sharing of ideas and resources, the sharing of good and bad experiences, the debating of issues, and support when support is needed. The effects not only increase the chance of successful implementation of an innovation (Whole Language in this study), but would seem to predispose an individual to future innovations since teacher efficacy is strengthened through higher degrees of success, increased confidence, and commitment to the process of change and the unending learning adventure.

Summary of Local Characteristics. Of the four local implementation characteristics identified by Fullan, three appeared to have had a significant impact on the teachers' implementation of Whole Language. The district office had limited influence, and was hardly mentioned by the teachers, with the exception of one or two consultants and some resources that were provided. The community had a role as an important source of support for classroom practice. Parents did not necessarily plan with all the teachers and have strong voices in the change process, but they affirmed the practices as "working or not working." Teachers consistently involved parents as much as possible and sincerely tried to make them part of the students' learning. The principal's influence was varied but in all cases was supportive. This cannot be underestimated as even passive support may be crucial to change. Proactive, instructional leaders were instrumental in implementing the change through their interaction with teachers, their support and knowledge, and their attitude

about change. Finally, the teacher-teacher collaboration was viewed as the prime influence on teachers' implementations. It can be recognized in many forms and would seem to be the leading factor in school's social reform. Beliefs and attitudes about innovations are shared and strengthened during this process. Much of the technical and practical aspects of teaching are also discussed and shared. Support in varying forms is crucial because it's always there and it too is shared whenever the need arises. This "interactive professionalism" (Fullan, 1991) is the key ingredient in successful change. These local factors contributed powerfully to the teachers' implementation phases in their work with Whole Language. Some factors were linked to specific situations and teachers more so than others, but in combination they were extremely influential.

External Factors Affecting Implementation

In as much as this innovation was locally developed, this final factor in Fullan's model has very limited applicability to this study. Even though the significance of this study arises from provincial documents and policies (e.g., "Program Continuity"), the teachers in this study gave no credence to them whatsoever. The role of government and/or other outside organizations were not recognized by the teachers as having an influence on their initiation and implementation attempts.

Themes Underlying Implementation

As explained earlier, the nine factors or characteristics of implementation identified by Fullan are limiting in that they address the roles of people and institutions, but fail to bring understanding to the

dynamics of the process. Once again, this study is limited in its insights into this realm as these themes were not part of Fullan's initial model, but there may be some data that can bring meaning to some of them. Since the data are limited, only those themes to which this study can contribute insights will be discussed. Fullan's six themes are (1) initiative taking and empowerment, (2) staff development/resource assistance, (3) restructuring, (4) monitoring/problem coping, (5) evolutionary planning and (6) vision-building.

The Whole Language innovation is a complex one with many underlying facets that influence teaching practices, beliefs and resources. Although it is rooted in one curriculum subject, language arts, it goes much deeper into the teachers' curriculums and programs. Fullan claims that single curriculum changes are merely "tinkering" with change, and that real, meaningful change is multi-level and holistic. The key themes identified above serve to better understand these "holistic" changes. This innovation was a multi-level change and being such may have something to offer to better understanding those themes.

Vision building was not described by the teachers in this study, again perhaps because it was not a "planned change" per se. However, there did seem to be "evolutionary" planning where teachers adapted their plans as they progressed and experimented. There were no stringent plans to adhere to. Within this environment, plans were "fit" together with the class. If new ideas or practices came along, the teachers appeared to make use of them if they "fit." Taking risks and changing with the conditions seemed to be an apparent characteristic of the teachers' implementations.

The teachers' "visions" of Whole Language seemed to grow and clarify as they progressed from stage to stage.

To successfully take risks and become innovators in their own right, the teachers participating in this study were in some way empowered or were naturally initiative-taking individuals. Fullan suggested that power sharing and collaborative control within schools is crucial in this regard. The teachers in Green Isle formed a group, including the administration, and were given broad power to plan, implement and evaluate their Whole Language innovations. The teachers did not view their administration any less, indeed, they complimented their ingenuity. The staff's morale and the excitement in the school was a result of their collaborative efforts. The successes fed off of each other and teachers were empowered to become positive change agents in the school. According to one teacher, the new staff members who have arrived over the last number of years easily assumed these roles as well. It was part of the school culture. The culture of the other two schools in this regard is less well known, but the teachers, if not empowered, were certainly self-initiators. There was no top-down pressure to make the changes, yet they took it upon themselves to find out about it because of their strong sense of self-efficacy and the needs of the students. Again, we see the indirect, or reactive role of some administrators as being supportive of such attitudes, by simply allowing it to happen. However, we cannot assume that this would happen with all teachers left to their own initiatives.

Assisting the teachers in their implementation endeavors are a variety of staff development strategies. Not all teachers were equally as

affected by these, or in the same manner. However, in all cases the teachers spoke of different types of professional development that helped them during this phase of the change process. All of the staff at Green Isle and the two at Ridgewood felt much the same way about their experiences with staff development--resources that were used outside of the local school setting were quite influential to the success of the practices. Parkhill teachers described them as useful, but not necessarily as having a major effect on what they were doing. Teachers that were influenced emphasized the importance of going to conferences and workshops. What made this so popular an avenue of knowledge seeking? Three major reasons emerge from the findings. The first is the expert knowledge that one can acquire and interpret first hand. It's not second-hand news being reported by others, but the "gurus" of Whole Language themselves. These sessions helped point teachers in certain directions and gave them new ideas. The information and enthusiasm taken home from such sessions seemed to have had a great impact, and even after the change, kept participants feeling refreshed and ready to re-enter the classroom. Second, the conferences reassured teachers that what they were doing was proper and appropriate. Maybe some problems had to be resolved, but the direction that they were going in was "right." Third, having several teachers from the same school go to these sessions together served a dual purpose--it encouraged individual teachers and assisted them with their own unique needs, but it also provided another venue for collaboration. The team at Green Isle made great use of these times to share and develop new strategies and ideas.

The second staff development strategy that greatly enlightened the teachers were classroom visitations. This provided first hand opportunities to see other Whole Language classes in progress. Talking to other teachers experiencing, or having experienced the same problems was very beneficial. Again, the collaborative concept was important for sharing of resources, seeing theory in action, support of what one is doing in their class, and reassurance. One teacher described the visitation as "worth a whole bunch of inservices." It's ironic that teachers are "living" next door to many experts and don't take advantage of it. Fullan (1991) would agree--he noted that teacher interaction is the best method of staff development, but one of the least used, and that "learning by doing, concrete role models. . . and fellow implementors" (p. 85) all are important in learning something new through interaction.

The final resource mentioned by Green Isle teachers, albeit used less frequently, was guest speakers. Again, the team could resolve several issues, but required the input of other knowledgeable persons at crucial times. When spelling strategies were a real issue the teachers needed the assistance of someone who could assist with some of their concerns and give advice on what to do next. Perhaps these visits to the school of external experts need to be encouraged if teachers are expected to take risks and venture into the unknown.

The teachers expressed the importance of professional development during varying times in the implementation phase. Fullan suggested that this is crucial and that too often inservicing is forgotten during implementation. It appears that many of the teachers made use of this

through-out their innovation and still do. Although, Fullan and others claim that these one-shot type workshops have little effect, why do these teachers place great value upon them? To be of use to most teachers, conferences and workshops must be practical and fulfill a need. Perhaps because the teachers were actively seeking out these workshops they automatically satisfied a need and perhaps the theory was doing what they wanted--pointing them in a direction, and guiding their practices. Many teachers like to receive pre-planned units with the accompanying manuals, but during these times the sessions served a different purpose--to educate the teachers about the theory and underpinnings of Whole Language. Specific implementation seemed to come from the teacher's individual and collective interpretations of these learnings.

Professional development had an impact on the teachers in this study in different ways. They gained insights into their implementation of Whole Language through conferences and workshops, class visitations and to some extent through external experts. Further, they were seekers of many of these professional development activities because they were ready to listen and, if need be, make changes. Whatever the professional development strategy, this study's findings would suggest that teachers place considerable importance on professional development as it relates to their implementation strategies.

The last theme that this study may provide insights into is restructuring. To Fullan (1991, p. 88) this would include such things as "organizational arrangements, roles, finance and governance, and formal policies that explicitly build in working conditions that, so to speak,

support and press for improvement." This theme may be more pervasive at the school and district level, but can have importance for individual or groups of teachers as well. This study's findings suggest that the teachers viewed their teacher-roles as substantially different after the innovation. They used their finances in different ways and structured their classrooms differently. Green Isle School met as a group and discussed the new role of the librarian, the library, the resource teacher, and parent/teacher conferences. Timetables were restructured and evaluation was redefined. Green Isle saw the need to restructure and had the foresight to do so. Two teachers mentioned the frustration with fitting the "new" ways into the "old" structure when discussing what was expected from the community and government levels. Another suggested that such "logistics" are part of the process and must be dealt with to implement successfully. Teachers saw the need for restructuring in their own classes so it would seem to follow that for school-wide implementation it would be equally as valuable. Innovations cannot properly be internalized if people are trying to "fit round pegs into square holes."

The findings of this study support many of the concepts in Fullan's themes. The dynamics of the change and the interaction between them provides yet even more insights into implementation. Teachers are empowered to innovate, staff development is viewed as important, classes are restructured to meet the demands of new innovations, and evolutionary planning is integral to their strategy of implementation.

Summary of Implementation/Continuation

The discussion above attempted to compare the experiences of this study's participants with Fullan's factors and themes of implementation. These characteristics were discussed individually, but in reality interacted and fed off of each other. The dynamics of this process were complex and varied for each individual teacher, yet many of these factors were found to be influential in the teachers' processes of implementation. The point to be stressed is that these factors in combination are powerful forces that increase the success of a teacher's innovations. The principal cannot alone influence teachers to change, just as an identified need in the classroom cannot produce conditions for change on its own. A teacher isolated and searching for something better for the classroom cannot successfully implement it on his/her own. However, in combination--the teacher looking for improvement, the principal supporting that teacher, and a genuine student need, and the innovation has a much better chance of being implemented.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was two-fold--to identify the factors that influenced teachers' decisions to adopt the Whole Language innovation, and to identify factors that influenced their implementation of that innovation. The analysis and reflections of the findings served to connect the recent change literature, particularly the models developed by Fullan, with the experiences of the teachers in this study. In this regard, many characteristics of this innovation were found to be parallel to Fullan's

claims and assertions. He does not suggest that all the factors and themes described are necessary for successful implementation, nor does he pretend that one is more influential than another. Keeping this in mind, there are several things to be learned from this study. First, the processes of change are themselves interacting. There are no definite, concrete lines between initiation and implementation, or implementation and continuation. As teachers described their stories, there were no clearly defined episodes that could be labeled as one or the other. Characteristics of the episodes provided more meaning for one phase than another, but defining them as only belonging to the one category is unwise and often impossible. Second, the combination of two, three or four of these factors interacting in sometimes subjective and complex ways has powerful impacts on the process of change. Teachers may not have said any one factor was "crucial," but when combined with two or three other factors they become very influential. Third, the meaning of this process has been described by these teachers in many subjective ways. What is crucial to one is non-essential to another. Yet many of the forces were described by most teachers, even if to varying degrees, perhaps suggesting that they were in some ways a determining force. A fourth reflection is that the process is gradual. Teachers experienced these implementations for years and if asked now would still claim they were not finished with the process. Fifth, the study has supported the contention that the most important force in the change process is other teachers. Interaction and collaboration is a key factor to recognize in any innovation involving teachers. And finally, the bottom line for teachers during initiation or implementation is what is best

for the students. The practicality ethic is inherent in most teachers, and if an innovation is not in some way going to improve the students' learning or working environment, then it isn't going to happen. This commitment to the students, what makes sense for the students, and what "fits" with their needs, would appear to be the overriding influence on the change process. As soon as the innovation becomes otherwise, motivated teachers are going to lose faith in it, and change will not occur in a deep, meaningful way.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this study was to identify influences and factors that had an impact on teachers' change processes during their transition to Whole Language. Two basis questions were asked: (1) What influenced teachers to make a change in curriculum methodologies and philosophies with respect to language arts? and (2) What was influential in making the implementation successful at the (a) personal level, (b) local level, (c) district level, and (d) government level? Fullan's model of the change process was used to order and present the findings as they related to initiation, implementation/continuation, and outcomes. Fullan's characteristics and factors affecting initiation and implementation were then applied to analyze and interpret the findings.

Many of the experiences of the teachers participating in this study confirmed Fullan's assertions about change and the change process. The conclusions arrived at from the analysis of the data can be viewed from two perspectives--the "evolution" of the change process, and the "evolution" of the meaning of change. The teachers described the gradual and evolving processes that led them to where they are today. The paths they followed were varied--many times taking on new directions and often overlapping or crossing other paths. As the teachers journeyed through these paths, their understandings and subjective meanings of the innovation were influenced by several factors and evolved over time. The nature of the innovation they were embracing undoubtedly had an influence on the direction and type of path they selected .

Nature of the Whole Language Innovation

There are many conditions and factors within the context of this study that had an influence on the change process experienced by the seven participating teachers. First, the innovation itself, Whole Language, is complex and multi-leveled. Not only is it a complex innovation, but it is also somewhat enigmatic in that there are no accepted manuals that have taken the philosophy and "canned" it into a step-by-step program. This in itself would contradict the very essence of the innovation. Therefore, the nature of the change became very subjective. Each teacher interpreted the philosophy and methodologies in her own way and implemented the various aspects of the program as she judged to be appropriate. This is what Fullan calls "natural" change. Further, there were seven "natural" change processes that were studied at the three school sites to try and identify what made them successful. The programs, being locally developed, created challenges to this study since much of Fullan's model is based on research from "planned" change. This distinction is important and may in itself be worthy of more study. The bottom-up innovation was initiated because of local teacher and student needs, as opposed to top-down innovations introduced through governmental or district office needs and policies. Therefore, the conclusions from this study must be interpreted within this context.

The Evolution of the Process of Change

Two phases of the change process were researched in this study--initiation and implementation. Because continuation appears to be a "state"

reached once implementation is internalized, it was merged into the implementation phase--the nature of this study made it difficult to separate these two phases. One aspect that was striking about this research was that the teachers did follow a process that evolved over time. Analyzing degrees of fidelity would not be appropriate for this innovation. How can you compare degrees of outcomes with start-up objectives when the initial understandings of the change were very vague and uncertain? The process these teachers went through is better described as an evolution because their motivations, needs and understandings were changing as the process progressed. This evolution was found in both initiation and implementation/continuation.

The Evolution of Initiation

Four conclusions are arrived at that relate to the evolution of the initiation process: a pre-conceived "fit," interaction with implementation, combinations of motivators, and voluntary adoption.

(1) **Pre-conceived fit.** Teachers entered the change process because of a need that they had. This need, discussed below in more detail, was the prime motivation for adopting a new innovation. To begin the "process" a pre-conceived "fit" must be seen between the teacher's beliefs and the program alternative. The teachers were searching for better programs and improvements in their practices to satisfy student and teacher needs. They would only choose alternatives that "fit" with their idea of what was workable in their classrooms. Once this was determined the process began.

(2) **Interaction with Implementation.** The "fit" of the innovation seems to strengthen and evolve as time and experiences progress. Ideas must be experimented with, tried and reflected upon before commitment increases. This requires implementation take place in incremental steps, which then feeds the "fit" of the innovation and encourages the commitment to adopt more. Interaction between the two phases is part of the initiation process. It is not a linear progression that sees one step start and conclude before the onset of the next step. As the "fit" takes on new shape, it evolves.

(3) **Combinations of motivations.** These combinations are responsible for successful initiation. Very few teachers discussed just one reason for becoming involved in Whole Language. There were some that had one major reason, but usually it was accompanied by others. It would seem that the combination of these increases the likelihood of adoption. This combination can be, and is, subjective, but the findings of this study revealed that even so, there are many commonalities that can be focused upon.

(4) **Voluntary adoption.** Voluntary adoption of this innovation was experienced by all the participants. They "bought" into the philosophy of their own accord. There were no pushes, no "dangled carrots," no coercion, and no mandates. Teachers became involved because they saw needs that had to be met and this was the alternative that best "fit" them. The process of adoption was a choice left to the teacher's professional judgement.

The Evolution of Implementation/Continuation

The process of implementation/continuation, as experienced by the teachers in this study, leads to seven conclusions: implementation interacts with initiation, factors of implementation interact with each other, implementation is gradual and incremental, success is more likely with complex innovations, the process is strengthened by simultaneous innovations, evolutionary planning and vision building are needed, and developing cultures of initiators accommodates the change process.

(1) **Implementation interacts with initiation**. As described above, initiation and implementation are inter-connected and constantly feed off of one another. As one is more clearly realized, commitment to the innovation increases and support is boosted. The incremental approach to implementation provides the avenue for such interaction. Implementation cannot be conceptualized as a finite process with absolute goals and objectives. The process will occur over a period of time and if the innovation is judged to be a good one, will become that much stronger.

(2) **Factors of implementation interact with each other.** The nine factors and six themes identified by Fullan interact throughout implementation. Each factor identifies the role of a person, an office, an institution or a resource, and it was obvious from the results of this study that they do not act in isolation from each other. Decisions explaining teachers' motivations and actions were often hard for them to recall because the process was not neatly carved up into influences that affected their choices. As one affects a teacher it reacts with another and it feeds off of others. The process is better understood within this context.

Further, working with a multitude of forces which influence an innovation would seem to strengthen its likelihood of success.

(3) **Implementation is gradual and incremental.** Successful implementation is gradual and incremental. All teachers were adamant that their journeys through the change process were slow and gradual. Most of them implemented the change through cyclical steps including trial and error experimentation, reflection, and discussion with peers which encouraged more experimentation. The time it took to implement varied, but the teachers controlled the speed and made sure it was at a rate they could accommodate. With such an approach, the needs, clarity of the innovation, and interpretation of its quality evolved and further strengthened the implementation process.

(4) **Success is more likely with complex innovations.** Success would appear to be related to the complexity of innovations. The teachers in this study were not looking for superficial changes that were politically or socially motivated. It didn't just mean adopting a new reading series, or using a new management technique, or practicing a new way to write--it was a multi-dimensional change that affected many levels of teaching. Over a number of years beliefs, practices and curriculum resources were changed--hardly a drop-in-the-bucket. If change is to occur successfully, the experience of these teachers would seem to indicate that the deeper, more meaningful change is better suited to teachers, providing it addresses a perceived need. They want something that is good for learning and that makes them as effective as they can be. Most smaller,

one shot innovations cannot hope to accomplish such goals. The process may be more powerful with more complex and long-lasting innovations.

(5) **The process is strengthened by simultaneous innovations.** Simultaneous innovations can feed off of each other and improve the implementation of all. One school in this study, Green Isle, was a community school. It was found that many of its fundamental principles paralleled those of Whole Language. Although the community school concept was introduced slightly before the teachers changed to Whole Language, its successful development and implementation carried over into the initiation of Whole Language. The teachers described this in favorable terms and it appeared that in such a circumstance one innovation supports and encourages the other. The message would seem to be that multi-innovations can be implemented successfully if their premises are compatible and fulfill the requirements of initiation. The experience of Green Isle School indicates that one innovation can assist in the implementation of another.

(6) **Evolutionary planning and vision building.** Vision building and planning needs to take on an evolutionary perspective. Although "vision building," as defined by Fullan, was not an explicit finding in this study, its presence was implicit. The teachers did plan and did have ideas of where they wanted to be and what they wanted to accomplish. Some did this with other teachers and some more individually. The important point, however, is that the planning was evolutionary. Stringent guidelines and objectives were not created by the teachers, but goals and strategies were developed over time and depended on the

experiences of early implementation attempts. The process was flexible and allowed for continuing input from the teachers as their needs and visions evolved.

(7) **Developing cultures of initiators.** Developing a culture for self-initiators and empowering teachers to constantly improve themselves were discovered to be factors in this innovation. Whether it was the principal, significant others, or the personality of the teachers, they all had the motivation to continue their development and change with the needs of the students. This should not be accepted as "common" because not all teachers are so inclined. This attitude towards change and its processes can only create more secure and confident contexts for innovations to thrive in. The culture these teachers were part of seemed to support their change efforts.

The Evolution of the Meaning of Change

Fullan often speaks of the "new" meaning of educational change--the deeper, more meaningful change that research suggests is more successful and productive. It has been found that the fads, the one-shots, and other first order types of innovations do not change teachers' attitudes, beliefs or underlying practices. These are changed only when deeper and more subjective meanings are involved. How does this happen? The findings of this study supports many of Fullan's factors, but some had more impact than others. The study's findings reveal how the meaning of the change evolved because of the contributions and influences of many factors.

Factors Influencing the Evolution of Meaning

Eight conclusions were arrived at which contribute to a better understanding of how meanings evolved in the change process: the continuing "fit" and quality of the innovation, teachers as "seekers" of better ways, the three R's, teacher advocacy and interaction, the principal, community and parent support, staff development, and restructuring.

(1) **The continuing "fit" and quality of the innovation.** The quality and "fit" of the innovation was a factor during implementation. The "fit" of the initiation was described above and can be viewed as both part of the process and the meaning of change. What is important to realize here is that the "fit" changed in its meaning as the implementation evolved. New understandings and new directions placed different meanings on what made sense in the classroom. Teachers found themselves learning and expanding and as proof was found that Whole Language practices worked, the "fit" and the quality evolved into something more substantial. Much of this involved the practicality-ethic of the teachers--if it didn't make sense in their subjective world within the classroom, then it didn't get implemented.

(2) **Teachers as "seekers" of better ways.** Teachers in this study were "seekers of better ways." As such, they searched for new meanings that would create better conditions for learning in their classrooms. Again, whether this was a personality trait, a predisposition based on past experiences with change, or due to an empowering culture in the school, the teachers were active initiators in searching out and enhancing their existing meanings of Whole Language. They were

committed to the change process because they saw themselves as professionals.

(3) **The three R's.** The three R's of the innovation (relevance, readiness, and resources) influenced the teachers' perceptions of Whole Language. Meaning was developed as teachers identified needs within the classroom. Student needs were the most significant motivation for their initiation. There were teacher needs as well--to feel more excited and involved, to interact more, to stay "fresh," and to have fun. The relevance of the Whole Language innovation brought meaning to its implementation. Teachers viewed themselves as ready in varying ways, but knowing they could control the process, that it was a locally developed change, and that they were committed to its process were key ingredients. Resources of both students and teachers added meaning as they could read about and affirm their own actions, and could implement their programs with good quality literature for the students. The three R's proved to be a strong influence for the teachers involved in this study.

(4) **Teacher advocacy.** Teacher advocacy and interaction are without a doubt the most influential factors associated with this innovation's success. Teachers were instrumental in affecting adoption of the Whole Language innovation, reflection on it, development and planning of it, and implementation of it. The meaning that teachers gave fellow-teachers was described by all that participated. Again, this did not occur in one prescribed manner--different teachers had different experiences. The point is that it was very influential for all of them. Whether "teams" within schools, or informal groups made-up of teacher colleagues within and

outside the school, were formed; or paired teaching and planning, mentor-student relationships were established--it didn't matter. Teacher collaboration is the most influential factor giving teachers meaning during the change process. Their sharing and support were recognized as invaluable.

(5) **The principal.** The principal was found to have played an important role in teachers' implementations. That particular role was described in two ways--as the responder and the proactive initiator. The underlying point here is that the principal in all cases was supportive, whether directly or indirectly. Not one teacher had a principal who was against, or antagonistic towards what they were trying to accomplish. The impact of this cannot be treated lightly for it can say volumes about what effects it had on these teachers. The proactive administrators were even more influential, and actually initiated and took part in the process of change. As such, principals were certainly forces in determining the meanings of the innovation.

(6) **Community and parent support.** Community and parent support were influential in that they affirmed that what the teachers were doing was valuable. Parents were not active initiators in the change process, but through their involvement in the programs, the schools and information meetings they provided a basis of support that gave the teachers confidence in what they were doing. The community indirectly supported their innovations by supporting them as teachers. Again, not one teacher had a situation with a parent that could be described as antagonistic or unfavorable to the new directions they were going.

(7) **Staff development.** Staff or professional development was an integral part of the teachers' meaning of change. All teachers spoke about the greater or lesser levels of influence various strategies had in furthering their understanding and implementation of Whole Language. Conferences, workshops, school visitations, teacher sharing, reading of the literature, and guest speakers all contributed to deeper meanings. The one-shot conferences cannot be underestimated as ineffective, as they so often are, because these teachers saw them as significant in increasing understanding, providing some direction and even giving practical suggestions. Teacher visitations were highly recommended and gave teachers opportunities to experience theory in action. Questions that still arose were handled through teacher interaction, and reading articles and books by Whole Language proponents. Experiences were varied, but the professional development of each was obvious in their evolution of the meaning of the innovation.

(8) **Restructuring.** On a classroom level, and for Green Isle, at the school level, there had to be restructuring. Although not a focus of this study, or the interviews, it was apparent that restructuring, to varying degrees, occurred for all teachers. New beliefs and practices could not be implemented in old, traditionally bound structures. The physical arrangements and set-ups changed. Timetables and roles of specialized teachers and aids changed. Parent roles changed. A restructuring was needed to accommodate the new methods and approaches.

Summary of Conclusions

The teachers that participated in this study successfully made a philosophical shift in their teaching styles from traditional, basal based practices to Whole Language practices. Each one experienced different time-lines, influences and even different outcomes. Yet, their perceptions of the change process had many similarities. Many of the factors and themes identified above were mentioned by the teachers to greater or lesser degrees. This point cannot be overlooked when making generalizations based on these findings. Neither can the locally developed nature of this innovation be minimized--it was not a "planned" change as defined by most change literature. However, many of the conclusions arrived at, from an analysis of the findings, would indicate that there are many commonalities in the roles and influences of the several factors identified in Fullan's model. Both the process of change and the meaning of change were accommodated and nurtured by the teachers. This was accomplished through an "evolution" of gradual and incremental steps over a period of years. The teachers controlled their processes and locally developed an environment where successful implementation could occur. Innovation was based upon needs of both the students and teachers and this "fit" with their own personal styles was ultimately the major motivation for initiation. The successful context of learning and professional development that the teachers created for themselves have many implications for those participating in and/or planning a change process.

Implications of the Findings for Practice

Based on the conclusions of this study, there are eight implications for educational administrators or change facilitators: (1) awareness of the nature of the change, (2) understanding the process of initiation, (3) connecting combinations of factors, (3) inclusion of major role players, (4) focus on deep meaning change, (5) development of a school "change" culture, (6) evolutionary planning and vision building, (7) influence of simultaneous, compatible innovations, and (8) time and professional development for change.

Awareness of the Nature of the Change

There needs to be an understanding of the nature of the change--"top-down/bottom-up"; the "planned/natural", and the "first order/second order" innovations--because each type requires different commitments and different processes. The findings of this study suggest that if change is to be successful then its nature must be first understood. Perhaps superficial change is appropriate in the right context, just as second order changes might be inappropriate in another. Perhaps we shouldn't view one type as good and another as ineffective. If the change has positive gains for students, teachers and the school, then it may be worthwhile. Not all innovations are going to be successful--this should be expected. However, teachers and administrators need to distinguish the good from the bad, and sometimes this will mean going through a process. What administrators need to understand, however, is what the expectations are going to be. As innovations cross his/her desk, they'll need to assess whether teacher

commitment will be high or low. For example, if deep, meaningful change is expected then being aware of the nature of the change will be required to better plan for effective initiation by the teachers.

Understanding the Process of Initiation

The response any administrator would like when introducing an innovation is commitment on the part of the teachers and others who will be involved--"buying into it." Administrators need to understand that developing commitment is an important process that occurs over time, and throughout both initiation and implementation. If the innovation is good, then initiation will strengthen as a teacher's "proof" is established. This "evolution" of adoption will need to provide the three R's: relevance, readiness, and resources. The most crucial, and justifiably so, is the relevance of the innovation to the needs of the teacher and the students. If there is not an agreed upon need addressed in the classroom, then teachers will not find a "fit" and meaningful change will not occur.

Connecting Combinations of Factors

Several factors affecting the change process were discussed in this study. Change, as found in this research, is often a subjective experience with most influencing factors impacting more on some than others. This is a force that is difficult to account for during planning. How can one assess what factors will have more meaning for the staff? The solution, therefore, would appear to be utilizing a combination of factors. Accommodate as many as possible with the intent of creating powerful combinations of factors for the teachers. This linking of combinations will

be a subjective process for each teacher, but hopefully will provide something for everybody without compromising the quality of initiation or implementation.

Inclusion of Major Role Players

There were several crucial role players involved in this study. Once again, the degrees of influence varied from teacher to teacher, but all were influential to some degree. By far the most influential roles were those played by other teachers, and because of this will be discussed again under "school change cultures" below. Two other influential roles included those of the principals and the parents.

1. The principal. What does the role of the principal contribute to innovations in schools? The traditional role of "gate-keeper" is still in existence even if losing effectiveness. What if the gate-keeper says "no" to a change? Teachers surely would question what freedom they had in the innovation process. If the teachers had positive feelings towards one, they would have to be suppressed and any activity stifled so as not to attract attention. Further, if the principal was negative, the teachers would be hard pressed to become innovators. The other scenario, however, is having a neutral principal. What effects might this have as opposed to having a proactive leader? Would it really make a difference whether or not he/she was involved? What would be the result of having a proactive, instructional leader as the administrator compared to someone who didn't support a position one way or another? A neutral administrator would possibly model apathy to the rest of the staff, and have little impact on their growth. Perhaps the teachers would have lower standards for themselves

and maybe for their students. The inspiration to take part in risky innovations could be minimal if it was common knowledge that support may not be forthcoming when it was necessary. The safety net might be removed leading to less risk taking. In all ways the effects of an apathetic principal could minimize the desire and commitment of the teachers, so much so that they may not participate in even the good, meaningful changes--the school would simply maintain the status-quo. Moreover, what would this do to staff collaboration, one of the richest sources of innovation? What effect would it have on professional development and school resources? It becomes quite obvious, based on the findings of this study, that teachers have good reason to appreciate support, no matter how responsive, from their principals. It would also seem likely that a proactive and empowering principal would be quite influential if he/she would lay the foundation for innovative processes in the school. Do not necessarily control the changes and be the initiator of all the change, but do create the culture for such development.

2. **The parents.** The parents in this study were involved in the change process through various avenues, yet mainly in receptive ways. This gave support to the teachers because parents accepted them as professional educators and trusted in their judgements. It had to be worked at through staff and teacher initiatives, but in the end generated significant public relations. Keeping parents informed through-out the process would seem to be important for successful change. As the staff learns, so must the parent. Further study may need to be done on the effects of involving them one step further--into planning and vision building. Depending on

the community some parents may demand more than being "informed." Still others may not even want to be "informed." However, it would seem reasonable to assume that it's a good starting place, and the more parents are involved in the school the more likely the school will be accepted by the community and students.

Focus on Deep Meaning Change

As a change facilitator, the school principal should develop the environment for deeper, more meaningful kinds of changes. Too often teachers are left with negative impressions of first order changes that just haven't worked. They require short bursts of increased energy, time and resources, and often make little progress. Teachers seem to gain more from innovations that deal with the more basic underpinnings of how children learn best. If these types of developments are reflected upon on a continuing basis where time and commitment can be more steady and better planned for, then teachers will see change in less dramatic ways. Change will be welcomed because, ironically, it's stable and under control--rather than ill-planned and ill-conceived.

Development of a School "Change" Culture

One of the most powerful findings of this study was with respect to the attitudes and predispositions of the teachers towards innovation and change. Educators know that many teachers are not empowered and are not self-initiators. Administrators will need to facilitate the development of a school culture that will support change in three ways: (1) Teachers need to be empowered to become initiators of innovations. There needs to

be a support network that will motivate teachers to attempt new things, and keep them abreast of new developments worthy of implementation. (2) An environment to encourage teacher interaction should also be developed. Teachers need the time and the opportunity to interact, share, and "talk shop." Time and again research makes the claim that teachers in many schools are isolates, yet research also tells us, as supported in this study, that teacher advocacy is the most influential force during implementation. (3) School culture should also facilitate restructuring and flexibility. Teachers need to know that if they commit time, energy and resources to an innovation, they will have the freedom and the means to properly implement it. School cultures exist whether planned for or not--it would seem more effective if school cultures were developed to support forward thinking and progress, rather than maintenance of the status-quo.

Evolutionary Planning and Vision Building.

Planners of change will need to take an "evolutionary" approach to long term goals and objectives. Needs, perceptions and clarity of innovations evolve with time. Strict, engraved guidelines are unrealistic and very impractical for teachers and students. Planning may have a starting point with an original vision, but allow for development and growth of that vision as time and experience dictates. Teachers are cautious, skeptical and even fearful of change characterized by mandates with hardened objectives. Administrators must provide the freedom and support for the evolution of understandings and planning.

Influence of Simultaneous, Compatible Innovations

It has been reported many times in research reports that multiple innovations are swamping the desks and shelves of administrators in all capacities. If meaningful change is to occur and educators are to keep abreast of current movements and progress, accommodating only one innovation at a time will not be enough. The experience of one school in this study supports the research finding that when innovations are compatible, they may actually feed off of each other and enhance the process of all. Administrators need to be aware of such opportunities during vision building and planning for the school.

Time and Professional Development for Change

The findings of this study reaffirm what has been reported in the research for years--change takes time. One or even two year expectations are often unrealistic and serve only to frustrate and sabotage the change process. If rushed, more mistakes are made, less is internalized, commitment decreases and ultimately success is minimized. Realistically, schools are traditional institutions which move very conservatively from one practice to another. To change beliefs, practices, and curriculum takes time. This study would support the contention that deep, meaningful change takes anywhere from five to ten years. Secondly, through-out innovative processes there must be professional development provided through various strategies including class visitations, teacher-teacher collaboration, workshops and conferences, professional literature, and school based sharing. Each contributes its own influences to the change process and fulfills a need. Meanings are subjective and may be created

and developed in varying manners. On-going professional development appears to create forward-thinking teachers.

Implications for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, three implications for further study become apparent.

(1) This study focused upon a "natural" change in local school settings. It would be very informative to study similar issues and apply Fullan's model to "planned" innovations. This study looked intensively at the school and classroom levels where "grass-roots" change occurred. Additional information could be attained by studying change efforts that more directly involve administrators at the school, district and government levels. Research on innovations whose planners desired greater degrees of fidelity, whether "top-down" or "bottom-up" would possibly add different perspectives to the process of change. Further, the teachers in this study all were self-proclaimed initiators. Studies involving teachers with different attitudes and dispositions toward change would contribute more understanding of a typical school staff.

(2) The research in this study was "interpretivist" in nature. Because it was very localized and the number of participants was fairly small, more studies of this nature need to be done to support or clarify its findings. As well, perhaps the findings from this study could be better understood and possibly corroborated through research methods where greater numbers of participants could be involved.

(3) Further research may be useful to contribute to this study's conclusions discussed herein. The influential factors that emerged in this

study need further corroboration and further probing. The roles of key players (teachers, principals, parents and district office), importance of school culture, interaction and understanding of the change process, effective methods of professional development, and nature of the innovation all are in their own right deserving of further study.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

PERSONAL REMINDERS

1. Describe the purpose of and nature of the study.
2. Discuss ethical terms relating to the data and interviewee.
3. Discuss the use of a tape recorder and making anecdotal notes.
4. Discuss the nature of the assignment and the possibility of use in my study.
5. Define the term "Whole Language" as used in this study.

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Would you please tell me a little about your teaching background and experiences in language arts?

2. Would you describe any memorable experiences you've had with changes or innovations in curriculum, school policies, jurisdictional policies, etc. and what your feelings were towards them?

3. What is your understanding of Whole Language? How does it differ from what you had previously done in the classroom?

4. Would you describe how you became involved in the implementation of Whole Language?

GUIDING QUESTIONS (used for probing only)

1. What were your perceptions about the Whole Language program when you began to implement it?

2. What did you see as attractive features or strengths of the Whole Language program?

3. How well did you understand the Whole Language program when you began to implement it?

4. Could you explain why you changed your L.A. program to Whole Language?

5. What steps did you take to help yourself implement the Whole Language program?

6. During your implementation of Whole Language describe the support you received from others.

- colleagues
- principal
- central office administrators
- jurisdictional consultants
- external consultants
- parents

7. Describe the influence that inservices had on your implementation of Whole Language.

- school level
- juristictional
- external conferences

8. Describe the role that resources and materials played in your implementation of Whole Language.

9. In what manner do you perceive time as playing a role in your implementation of Whole Language?

- prep. time
- timeline for dev. of strategies
- time for reflection

10. Up to this point in time, what roadblocks did you encounter while trying to implement Whole Language?

11. What advice would you give to a principal wanting to implement Whole Language into his/her school?

12. Do you perceive your professional role or responsibilities any differently now that you have implemented this change?

- role in school
- role in classroom

- role related to colleagues

13. To what degree, in your judgement, have you implemented Whole Language in your classroom?

14. How satisfied are you with what you have accomplished?

15. Are there any other comments that you would like to make with respect to this innovation?

APPENDIX B
PARTICIPANT LETTER

April 18, 1991

Teacher Participants,

This letter is to inform you of the purpose of my study so that you may better understand its nature and further judge whether you wish to be involved. Please feel free to discuss with me aspects of the study you want clarified or wish to know more about.

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions of the characteristics contributing to successful curriculum innovation. The change that I will focus on is Whole Language instruction within the context of elementary schools.

Participant teachers will be teachers that have made a transition in their teaching philosophies in elementary language arts from the more traditional skills or phonics based approach with basal readers to the "Whole Language" or process approach. Teachers should feel that they have successfully made the change and implemented the adopted philosophy.

Three research questions will provide the parameters and guidelines of my inquiry*:

1. What factors influenced teachers to make a change in curriculum methodologies and philosophies with respect to language arts?
2. What was influential in making the implementation successful at the (a) personal level, (b) local level, (c) district level, and (d) government level?
3. What have been the outcomes for the teachers who experienced successful Whole Language implementation in reference to (a) personal, intrinisic gains, (b) personal, extrinsic gains, and (c) school organizational gains?

The data collection will strictly be through interviews and field notes about the interviews. All transcripts of your interviews will be available to you to and be held in the strictest confidence (with the exception of a transcriber). The results of the study will be shared with you upon request and I anticipate will assist us all in our understanding of the change process with respect to new curriculum in our schools.

Thankyou for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Neil Ingram